THIRTY YEARS IN TROPICAL AUSTRALIA

THE RT. REV. GILBERT WHITE, D.D., BISHOP OF WILLOCHRA

Frontispiece.

THIRTY YEARS IN TROPICAL AUSTRALIA

BY THE

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BISHOP OF WILLOCHRA

WITH A PREFACE BY THE

RIGHT REV. H. H. MONTGOMERY, D.D.

WITH MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

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TO

M. E. W. AND L. A. W.

THIS BOOK IS

DEDICATED

PREFACE

It was my happy privilege to have helped in the consecration of Bishop Gilbert White in Sydney in 1900 as the first Bishop of the Diocese of Carpentaria. Ever since I have been in closest intimacy with him, honoured by knowing his inmost thoughts on all great questions. He was no stranger to Queensland when consecrated: for fifteen years he had worked there as a priest, to be followed in due course by fifteen more years as Bishop, this book being the record therefore of thirty years of as fine and devoted a work as any achieved by living man.

Let it be recognized also that the Diocese of Carpentaria comprises the north coast of Australia nearly from east to west. All of it the Bishop travelled incessantly, his home consisting of a small house on Thursday Island which was seldom occupied by him, tenanted, however, by a devoted sister. Some things indeed the Bishop has almost entirely omitted from this book, namely, the daily and very serious trials of heat, flies, and constant fatigue of long journeys by land and sea, by night and by day. Never, indeed, was there a man more reticent about matters which fill the pages of many travellers and not without good reason.

These chapters provide a varied and fascinating bill of fare whilst humour sparkles everywhere. The Cape York region, the Aboriginal Mission Reserves on the Mitchell and the Roper, serious adventures in ketches in "the Gulf," the Northern Territory, the Torres Strait Islands, and a memorable journey to Bishop Brent in the Philippines, all these will be read with interest and with profit. We are glad also that the Bishop has included the record of his trip, already published separately, along the telegraph line from Port Darwin to South

Australia through the very heart of the continent. He was the first minister of religion to visit those scattered stations of the operators, and I am not aware that he has been followed by any others.

The time came, of course, when such a sphere had to be resigned into the hands of a younger man, and a right worthy successor he has. The last event of the Episcopate of the first Bishop in that northern region has its own special interest, namely, the acceptance by him of the Mission in the Torres Strait Islands, handed over to him without conditions by the London Missionary Society.

From Northern Australia the Bishop descended into the South Australian State, but not to a well-organized Diocese. It was characteristic of him to elect to be Bishop of a newly formed Diocese, and as such unorganized, in what may not unfairly be called the back blocks of South Australia. Here, as Bishop of Willochra, he is creating traditions fine in aim and full of promise for Australian life, moral and spiritual. And in this connexion I may say that I do not know a more fearless man. He believes in plainness of speech, and since he loves Australia and the Australians he tells home truths in a manner understanded of the people. If he ruthlessly lays bare the sins of modern social life, even those who are offended will not fail to recognize his transparent faithfulness to the plain duties of his office. In the larger life of the Church in Australia Bishop Gilbert White has taken a leading part of late in a very happy consummation, namely, in the consolidation of one Australian Board of Missions which can now speak for the whole church and for every section of it.

The book too has the scent of Australia in it, and those who best know that great continent will linger over its pages and perhaps long for the return of days gone by, feeling once more the glamour of a land which captures the heart with an intensity of affection which lasts to the end of life.

H. H. Montgomery (Bishop)

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CHAPTER I

FIRST IMPRESSIONS (1885)

A FEW personal preliminary words are necessary to the understanding of what follows. I was born in 1859 of English parents at Rondebosch near Cape Town, came to England a year later, was educated at Fettes College, Edinburgh, and Oriel College, Oxford, was ordained priest in 1884, and left England for North Queensland on account of my health in 1885. I became Bishop of Carpentaria in 1900, and fifteen years later I left the north, after thirty years' work there, for the new diocese of Willochra in South Australia.

On September 25 of the year 1885 I awoke for the first time on Australian soil, having landed at Townsville late the night before. My ears were full of the sound of the rattle and clash of the palm-trees by which the house was surrounded. I opened my eyes and was astonished at the brilliancy of the light. Through the open door of my room I saw, framed by the fronds of a great palm, the dazzling blue of Trinity Bay, and the wooded slopes of Magnetic Island bathed in a flood of sunlight of whose intensity we in England have no conception at all. Below was a high fence covered with brick-red bougainvillia, and on one side the billowy curve of a huge spreading poinciana, one entire mass of scarlet blossom. I came to the conclusion that, whatever else North Queensland might lack, it was not going to lack vividness of colour or startlingness of contrast, and I have never seen reason to change my mind.

My first duty was to go for a couple of months to the

sugar-growing district of the Herbert River. The sugar industry was then flourishing and worked mainly with South Sea Island labour. Some time previously there had been gross abuses in the way in which these Islanders were recruited, and many of the notorious "black-birders" were still at large, but the Government had interfered effectively to put a stop to the evils, and I saw nothing of them. The "boys," whom I soon got to know well, were contented and happy, and many of them were profoundly influenced by the various missions established for their benefit. Their way of showing their loyalty was sometimes primitive. One lady missionary, who had acquired a wonderful influence over the Islanders on the surrounding plantations, incurred the enmity of some of the Islanders by persuading a number of them to give her their weapons, and to forswear tribal feuds, and the others threatened to take her life. This came to the ears of the Malayta men, of whom a number were working near, and they inscribed on Mrs. R.'s gate certain mystic signs which were interpreted to mean that if any man interfered with Mrs. R. in any way he would speedily find himself dying by the most uncomfortable and painful death known to the Island connoisseurs. A dozen policemen could not have protected Mrs. R. more securely than these rude signs.

Although I believe these Islanders were well and justly treated, at any rate from 1885 onwards, I cannot but feel that much injustice was done when they were, in the name of a White Australia, deported to their Islands about fifteen years ago. They were brought over solely for the benefit of the Queensland sugar industry, and when their time was up, numbers of them were allowed to settle down, acquire land, and adopt European food and customs without any idea that they would ever be compelled to go. Then of a sudden the command was given that all who had not been twenty years in the country, or exempted for one or two other causes, must

return to their own islands, where in many instances they had been forgotten, and in some cases were actually killed as intruders. Had the limit been fixed at ten years instead of twenty, little injustice would have been done, but men who had been living under civilized conditions for fifteen years or more were usually quite unfit to return, and bitterly resented their treatment. The farewell cry of a steamboatful of deported Islanders, leaving Cairns, leaves an unpleasant impression: "Good-bye, Cairns! Good-bye, White Australia! Good-bye, Christians!"

In 1885, however, these things were in the future, and the Islanders were like careless happy children.

I left Townsville by a small coasting steamer, and was landed off Lucinda Point in a small boat, considerately bailed out for the purpose with a coffee-cup! On our way to the shore we passed a notorious labour schooner, which had kidnapped hundreds of Islanders, but its misdoings were happily over. At Dungeness we changed to a boat that leaked a little—though only a little—less and set off up the river. I was much struck by the beautiful vegetation, especially the Moreton Bay chestnuts with red blossoms among which clouds of parakeets of all kinds were screaming. The river was shallow and full of snags. At the Victoria wharf our boatman adjourned to the hotel, and on his return he explained that the sun had affected his health, and all he could do was to go to sleep in the bow of the boat. I had to take charge, and considering the number of snags I considered that the passengers were lucky to get up safely. The snags were not so bad, but the river at this time swarmed with alligators. A friend of mine living far from any church used to put in his Sundays shooting alligators as the most pious work he could think of, and disposed of fifteen in one morning. There was then no bridge across the river, and when there was anything like a fresh, one crossed in considerable trepidation. Several

persons lost their lives while drawing water. It is a mistake to think that alligators will not travel by land. A stockman met a great brute in a paddock opposite Macknade, over a mile from the river, and his horse did half a mile at a pace which would have won the Melbourne Cup. I have heard of them four or five and even seven or eight miles from water. I landed at Cordelia Vale, and was delighted with my first experience of a tropical garden—gorgeous scarlet hibiscus, the sweet-smelling frangipani, different varieties of bougainvillia, orchids of bewildering variety, yellow alamanda, passion fruit, grenadillas, grapes, guavas, pine-apples, pomegranates, mangoes, figs, coco-nuts, papaws, oranges, and limes made a walk abroad a wonderful experience for one just landed in the tropics. One must add the gorgeous butterflies, red, green, and a flashing metallic blue, and the quaint insects, especially the mantides, which assumed all sorts of curious shapes and disguises to entrap their prey, from an ordinary-looking orange-tree leaf to a bit of straw or an old stick.

I had two things to learn, to ride and to find my way. The first was a simple but painful process. On the day after my arrival Mr. W., who had kindly consented to show me round, mounted me on a very lively young mare, and galloped me round for most of the day over what he called roads, but which seemed to me only places where there were stumps instead of trees, and holes instead of stones. I got stiffer and sorer as the day went on, and would have given anything to call a halt, but I was young and did not like to give in, and finally learnt, if not to ride, at least to stick on, which is, after all, one of the most useful things in the bush. As to finding my way I soon found that it was not so easy as I thought. I left a "Selection" with full directions as to how to reach the next one, four or five miles away, and took for my guidance a forest fire, which was a mark I could not miss. Carefully keeping

my relative position I arrived at my destination after about an hour's travelling, and was taken aback to be greeted by the question, "Have you lost your way?" It was the house I had started from an hour before. I often lost my way after that, but had sense to remember which way to go to find it again. I lived in the Rectory by myself, and one day just as I was having tea a most terrific thunder-storm came up. A tree close to the house was struck, and the whole room was filled with blue fire. I felt pretty scared and made a bolt for the kitchen, which was lower, and as I thought safer. When I arrived there I found that I had a big teapot in one hand and a slice of bread and butter in the other! How I opened the doors I could never find out.

The scenery north of the Herbert is some of the most beautiful in the world. Off the coast lies a great rocky island named Hinchinbrook, which is 4000 feet high, and covered with virgin tropical scrub. The island is thirty miles long and separated from the mainland, which here runs up into mountain ranges nearly as high as Hinchinbrook, by a channel only a mile wide. This salt-water river, for such it really is, can be traversed by small passenger steamers, and the views are surpassingly beautiful. In fact, the whole coast up as far as Cooktown is most remarkable, and as the water is deep the largest steamers are able to approach it closely.

It was rather a trial to leave this fascinating country for an uninteresting mining town like Charters Towers, whither I went by train from Townsville. The railway to Charters Towers was built on the system of "compensating grades," or the switchback principle, little effort being made to level the undulating country. In one place the train ascended the Range, a height of several hundred feet, with a grade of, in places, 1 in 25. Only by terrific groaning and several times almost stopping did we arrive at the top. I heard it was not unusual for the train to slide all the way back to the bottom, some-

times more than once, before it succeeded in the ascent. About fifteen miles from Charters Towers the train used to cross the Burdekin River on a low-level bridge a quarter of a mile long, rushing down a steep incline on one side, and thundering across the bridge at full speed in order to get up sufficient impetus to get up the incline on the other side. On a later occasion we stopped at the top of the incline, and the guard and engine-driver held a council to which the passengers were not invited. Looking out of the window I saw that the bridge had totally vanished and a turbid flood was rushing over the place where it should have been. At this moment the engine gave a shriek, and we started off down the incline in the hope and faith of finding the rails somewhere under the water. We got across safely, though there was an anxious moment when a big log came down the stream, and it was a question whether it would hit the bridge before or after our passage. At Ravenswood Junction I noticed a number of cases of dynamite packed between the two lines of rail so carelessly that the corner of one case was about two inches from our train as it passed. Railway travelling in those days was not without its excitements, as when on one occasion the guard got drunk, and the train dashed down the Range with its 1 in 25 gradients at full speed without any brake. Of course all these things have changed long ago, and the line is now as safe and prosaic as any in Australia.

The town of Charters Towers was at this time rapidly growing, having some years later a population of over 25,000. A number of Germans were among the fortunate owners of the famous Day Dawn Mine, but most of them made but a poor use of their money. The methods of gold extraction were, of course, of the latest, and a visit to the mine or mill was always interesting. It struck me one day to look up the chapter on gold-mining in Pliny's "Natural History," and I found to my

surprise the old Roman knew just as much about gold-mining as we do, and the methods in his day were precisely similar. He describes the method of signalling by means of knocks, which is still in use; he describes the bringing of water for hundreds of miles by means of races hung to the face of the cliffs, and by inverted siphons which conveyed it across the valleys. He describes minutely the tables on which the gold was collected, the bushes through which the waste water was passed, and which were afterwards burnt for the gold they had caught, and he even—greatest surprise of all—describes the quicksilver amalgam process, though the quicksilver had to be recovered by a mechanical process, and the method of separating the gold from the quicksilver, the amalgam being put in chamois-leather bags which were pressed and rolled until the quicksilver came out through the pores. Verily there is little new under the sun!

There was of course much speculating in shares, and as I was a disinterested spectator, never having felt any inclination to own shares, I sometimes noted curious things. On one occasion a party working at the Black Jack some six or seven miles away came upon good gold and set off in the only cab to bring the news to the Towers. A thoughtful young man set off at the same time on foot through the bush at his best pace. The party in the cab were so elated at their good fortune that they had to stop at two hotels on the way to celebrate their luck, and on arrival at Charters Towers they found that the man on foot had arrived, bought up all the shares that were to be got, and then announced the news, so that not a share was to be had.

There seems to be something about mining which often fails to bring out a man's highest qualities. I remember, for instance, an account of a shareholders' meeting of a mining company in a little mining town which was given me by one who was present, though

not as a shareholder. It was discovered that the secretary of the company had been misappropriating its funds. There was no question of calling him to account for such a venial offence; besides, it might form an inconvenient precedent for some of the shareholders who were secretaries also of other companies. Finally it was resolved to offer the secretary £20, out of the funds of the company, if he would resign. The secretary accepted the offer and resigned, and a meeting was held to authorize the payment of the £20. Upon this a shareholder got up and said, "Mr. X owes me nearly £20"; and another shareholder said, "He owes me £20 too." Finally it was resolved to divide the £20 fairly between the two shareholders, and the matter was thus amicably settled. One wonders what the secretary thought and said!

One day I received a request to take a wedding at a mine some twenty miles distant. This mine had recently been floated on the English market, and an enormous sum had been spent on erecting a magnificent mill, a tramway to the mine, a great manager's house, and every conceivable contrivance for extracting and treating the ore. I took the coach for Y, and as there had been a good deal of rain there was much discussion as to whether we should be able to cross the river which we had to pass about half-way. We managed to negotiate the yellow flood in safety, and the driver then turning to me remarked, "It would have been all right if she had been up. I promised Jim, the chap you are going to fix up, that if the water was too high, I would take out one of the coach horses, tie you on, and bring you up to time somehow!"

I arrived at the mine in due course, and the manager showed me over the great buildings and laid especial stress on the labour-saving tips at the mouth of the mine, which would enable so many hundred tons of ore to be conveyed to the mill in so many hours without

handling. He then invited me to go below with him, pointing out the double shaft and its heavy timbering made to facilitate the getting away of enormous quantities of ore in the shortest possible time. "Show Mr. White some gold," he said to the underground boss. "There is none to show, sir," was the reply, and though the manager became furiously angry and discharged the man on the spot, what he said was quite true. The total amount of ore raised from the mine was 180 tons, and the total amount of gold was less than as many pennyweights.

I like to think, however, that such cases are the exception and not the rule. There have been and are some splendid mining men in the north of Australia, men who mine to get the minerals and not to sell the mine, and have faced ill fortune with heroic fortitude, and success without being spoiled by it, men like Mr. E. H. T. Plant of Charters Towers, Mr. John Moffat of Irvinebank, and Mr. John Munday of Herberton, whose consideration for their men, and whose courage and foresight made their names household words in the north.

The north of Queensland is extraordinarily rich in minerals, especially gold, tin, and wolfram, and though high wages and difficulties of transport have in many cases kept the mines back, they will come into their own as other sources of supply tend to diminish. Some of the mines at Charters Towers were so rich that the men had to be closely watched to prevent thefts of ore, and on one occasion some clever thieves actually succeeded in stealing a red-hot crucible containing several thousand pounds worth of gold out of the very furnace itself.

The climate of Charters Towers was dry and very hot in summer. I have seen the thermometer under a veranda up to 115°, but that was exceptional. The heat is not like the heat of India or Ceylon, where 95° is harder to bear than 115° in Australia. Sunstroke is

much more rare than in England, and is usually a euphemism for an overdose of whisky.

Charters Towers had at that time no water-supply, and it could not be described as a beautiful place, the view consisting chiefly of poppet-legs and engine-houses, but the sunsets were wonderful and compensated to some extent for the lack of natural beauty.

While at Charters Towers I saw a good specimen of those terrific dust-storms to which most parts of Australia are occasionally liable. The weather had been exceptionally hot, when, about 6 P.M., we noticed a very lurid purple and indigo cloud with a light-coloured base due east of the town. It approached with great rapidity, and resolved itself into a mammoth dust-storm. Great columns 100 feet high were whirling along, as far as the eye could reach, with vivid flashes of lightning playing among them. We rushed for doors and windows and got them shut just in time. The wind rushed down with terrific force, shaking the house and carrying before it sheets of iron and roofs of old buildings and outhouses. The great clouds of dust, just as in the pictures of "Arabs overwhelmed by a dust-storm in the desert," hid everything from view. Three children were passing just as the cloud came down, and I saw them all thrown down and, as it seemed to me, whirled away into the air. I rushed to the rescue, but they had disappeared, and I hope were blown to their own door. There was not much rain, but the thermometer fell 20°.

With a large and growing population and only two clergy the work was pretty heavy, but was occasionally lightened by quaint experiences.

One day a stout, florid man of between forty and fifty rolled his way up to my gate, and leaning on it commenced as follows: "Hi, parson, are you Mr. White?" I meekly admitted the fact. "Well, I want to see you about a very important matter. You see I am a job-master by profession, but all the people I had to do with

were such rogues that I've had to go through the court; but that is not what I came about. The fact is, sir, that I have been thinking that I ought to be confirmed, and I've come to you to arrange about it." I mildly questioned whether the bankruptcy court was the best of preparations. "Not at all, your honour, I'm a true Christian. Why, I went to church when Bishop Stanton was up here last, and I gave a subscription to the Sunday School Picnic last year, or else it was the Jockey Club; I know it was one or the other." "But are you a member of the Church of England?" I queried. "I don't seem to remember you." "Yes, shure, your reverence; didn't I black Pat Molloy's eye when he said that he had heard that the Church of England was a branch of the Catholic Church?" "But do I not perceive a certain aroma somewhat suggestive of recent acquaintance with spirituous liquors?" "Me drinking, your lordship, no, not the leastest little drop have I tasted for the last hour or more, and then 'twas to oblige a friend who felt lonely like by himself." "Well, I am afraid you will have to be a little less ambitious, and begin knocking off drink and come to church a little oftener than once a year." "Well, your eminence, I thank you very much for your good advice, and maybe you'll speak to the Bishop about the confirmation." "Well, well, we'll see about that when you have begun to show some signs of being in earnest in your request." "Indeed, and that I am. Could your holiness see your way to making me a trifling advance of half a crown?"

Another day an Italian bridegroom, who understood but little English, had to repeat after me a long declaration ending up with the words that there was "no relationship or affinity, or want of consent of parents or guardians, or any other lawful cause to prevent my being married." He blundered through the declaration with growing bewilderment, until at last coming to something

he could understand he said with heartfelt emphasis, "or any other *awful* cause."

Occasionally weird worshippers used to stray into church, and on one occasion I found after service that a dark gentleman declined to leave, declaring that the church belonged to him, or he to the church, I was not clear which. On asking him what his own views might be, he replied with drunken dignity, "I am a Protestant Mohammedan," and it was only by assuring him that the police were specially looking out for a Protestant Mohammedan that he was induced to leave.

On one occasion a farmer, who did not believe in the law as a remedy for breach of promise, appeared to arrange for the marriage of his daughter to a young man whom he suspected of trifling with her affections. "I've told him," he continued, "that if he don't turn up I'll thrash him till this carriage whip is broke." Next day he came galloping along cracking the whip and shouting, "They're coming! They're coming!" All through the ceremony he stood behind the doubly nervous bridegroom nursing his whip, and finally departed in charge of the somewhat depressed wedding party.

One day a gentleman resident in the town called to see me and said he wished to consult me on a serious matter. He had lately been married a second time, and his second wife was exceedingly jealous of his wearing his first wife's wedding-ring. What was he to do? Loyalty to his first wife's memory compelled him to wear the ring, but his second wife's jealousy left him no peace. While we were talking there was the sound of a cab driven rapidly up, a whirlwind passed up the garden path, and a hurricane in the shape of the wife burst into the room. "What do you mean by daring to talk to my husband without my knowledge, you meddling, interfering idiot?" and then turning to her husband she let loose on him a perfect volcano of abuse

as long as her breath lasted. When I could get in a word I said: "I think your question has answered itself. It does great credit to your heart to want to be loyal to number one, but you have got to live as best you can with number two, and my advice to you is to take off the ring and bow to the storm, if you cannot control it." He was taken away in the cab and I saw them no more.

Shortly after this I had one of the very few attacks of fever that I ever had in tropical Australia. I dreamed that I had to move my house about a quarter of a mile, and as some low ground had to be crossed I had gone to some trouble to make a huge embankment on which to slide it across. This embankment was composed entirely of Chinamen's heads, and whenever I tried to move the house those grinning heads would start to roll down the embankment in the most disconcerting way. I finally became so much annoyed that I began to doubt whether the house was worth all the trouble and expense of my elaborately prepared embankment. It was, I think, this unpleasant experience (for then as now I had a real respect for the patient and good-natured Chinaman) that convinced me that I had been working too hard, and induced me to ask the Bishop to give me work for a time in one of the country districts.

CHAPTER II

THE TABLE-LANDS (1887–1891)

BEHIND Cairns, which has a large and sheltered harbour, spoilt only by its bar of easily removed stiff clay, the land rises in a great jungle-covered wall, 2000 feet high, which culminates some thirty-five miles to the south in the peaks of Bellenden Ker and Bartle Frere, each over 5000 feet, which is a good height for Australia, whose loftiest mountain, Kosciusko, is only 7000 feet. Through this mountain wall the River Barron cuts its way, making a sheer leap of 600 feet before it enters the narrow cañon by which it attains the level plain at the foot of the Range. When the river is in flood the Fall forms a spectacle not easily forgotten, and is one of the sights of Australia. Many years ago I went to Kuranda, a small settlement above the Fall, to recuperate after an illness, and the river being very low it occurred to me to see if I could climb down the face of the Fall. This I successfully accomplished, wearing a pair of rubber shoes, going out on to the jutting rock half-way down and then continuing my way to the bottom. In one place I had to make my way along a crack in the face of the cliff, and it suddenly dawned on me that it was the only way to negotiate it, and that I might easily miss it on my return and get into trouble. I felt in my pockets, and finding a piece of white paper I jammed it into a crack. Sure enough on my return I did miss the right place, and finding I could go no farther I looked about until I saw the paper about ten feet above me, and was enabled to

return safely. When I got back to Kuranda I thought it was about time that I returned to work. A path has now been made to the bottom opposite the Fall, but I never heard of any one else descending the face.

The excellence of Cairns as a port was probably the reason that induced the Government, some thirty years ago, to decide on taking the railway to the interior up the gorge of the Barron River. The undertaking was one of great difficulty, the line passing along the face of a huge bluff through numerous tunnels, in front of, and only a few feet above, the Fall. During the construction the soil was thrown from the line over 1000 feet or more of cliff, and occasionally a workman went the same way. Of course the line is a success from a spectacular point of view and attracts many tourists, but it is inconvenient and expensive to work and liable to be destroyed in wet seasons by great land-slides and by the blocking of the tunnels. Before the line was made the road, crossing about two miles above the Fall, was reported very dangerous, many persons having been drowned in fording the river. On one occasion, when riding up from Cairns with my sister, we observed two men just entering the water from the opposite side. When they saw us in the distance they stopped and returned to the bank, where one man got off his horse and pretended to be washing his hands. When they saw that we had crossed in safety they resumed their journey. The incident is fortunately entirely unique in my long experience of Australia.

About thirty-five miles inland from the Range over which the Barron empties itself is a further rise of 1000 feet leading up to the main divide. On this higher table-land is situated the little mining township of Herberton, where I spent four happy years, 1887–1891. The brawling Wild River runs through the township, and is crossed by a bridge three thousand feet above

sea-level. Herberton was at that time famous for its tin-mines, which were more profitable than gold. While I was there, two working miners discovered a very rich "show" which they sold for £60,000. One of them built a fine house, got married, and chartered a special steamer to take him to Sydney for his honeymoon; the other selected a simpler means of getting rid of his unaccustomed wealth. He took to racing, and in less than two years both men were again working for wages in the mine that they had discovered.

A somewhat similar case was told me by a mine manager near Herberton. He was working in the early days on the rich alluvial field of the Palmer, and having accumulated £1050, he thought that he would pay a long-deferred visit to his mother in Sydney. He set aside £50 for the purpose of bidding farewell to his friends in Cooktown, and took the £1000 in five-pound notes, which he put into his hand-bag. On his way to Sydney he stayed for a fortnight in Brisbane and spent the time in driving round and seeing old and new friends. When he wanted money he would go to his (unlocked) bag and take out a number of notes. At the end of the fortnight he found only two left, which just covered his bill, and so he availed himself of his return ticket, went on board the steamer, and returned to Cooktown, a sadder and, it is to be hoped, a wiser man.

I made my first visit to Herberton by coach from Port Douglas, a small port with no harbour worth mentioning, about thirty miles north of Cairns. The passengers are landed in a small boat, no very pleasant experience in rough weather. The coach was full, and among my fellow-passengers inside were a fat German Jew, an exquisitely dressed young "Jackeroo" going for the first time to a station for "colonial experience," and a tall young "new chum" Irishman, who appeared with such a huge swag that the driver ordered him to

take it back and leave half the contents behind. The Irishman presently returned with the diminished bundle, and we prepared to start. We could not help noticing that the Irishman seemed to have grown in size since we first saw him, and when he sat down between his companions on either side it was like a cork being driven into a bottle. We questioned him as to his sudden increase of size, and he related with great glee that he had taken two suits of thick clothes out of his swag and had put them on over his other clothes. We had not long to wait for an exemplification of Horace's motto, *Raro antecedentem scelestum Deseruit pede poena claudo.* At the foot of the Range the coach pulled up and the driver fired off his ancient witticism: "Now then, any of you gentlemen like to get out and pick flowers?" The temperature was 105° in the shade, the Range three miles long and the angle of ascent for the first half-mile as steep as any vehicle could negotiate in safety. By the time we walked up to the top and were allowed to get in again, our Irish friend was cursing the driver, his three suits, the weather, and the road with laudable impartiality. Near the summit was an accommodation house famous for its buttered scones, and these restored our hero's equanimity. On getting into the coach he dropped a buttered scone down on to the sleeve of the Jackeroo's new black coat, and in response to his remonstrances remarked: "What's the matter with it? Sure, it's the foinest bread and butter I ever saw in my loife." I regret to say that in one of the many suits he had secreted a big bottle, and he finished up by getting very drunk and going to sleep with his head on the knees of the disgusted Jackeroo, whose face of indignant protest convulsed the rest of the passengers. The German Jew made himself as unpleasant as his tribe usually manage with the best intentions to do, and it is to be feared that he was chiefly greeted with laughter when, on our being turned out again to walk

over a rocky crossing, he slipped on a stone and fell headlong into the stream.

We spent the night at an accommodation house, famous for the simplicity of its breakfasts, which consisted of bread and butter and an ordinary iron bucket filled to the brim with boiled eggs. I remember on a subsequent occasion staying there for the night with my sister, whom I had just met on her arrival from England. My sister innocently asked the woman of the house when tea would be ready. "Oh, directly," was the reply; "there it is coming in," pointing to a bullock being driven up to be killed. She was not to be persuaded to have any, even when the host pointed with his knife and inquired persuasively, "Try 'eart?"

There was a direct track from Cairns to Herberton, but it was not practicable for wheels. It scaled the Range at a place where it was like the wall of a house, and then passed through some twenty-five miles of dense scrub.

It is a part of the curious Australian *meiosis* to call the tropical jungle "scrub," on the same principle on which they call the wedge-tailed eagle, the largest eagle in the world, excelling even the famous golden eagle, an "eagle-hawk." The scrub is composed of magnificent trees, whose straight stems run up one hundred feet or more without a branch: cedar, kauri, mahogany, and a vast variety of valuable timber. One man sent to the Colonial Exhibition in London one hundred specimens of furniture timbers all cut within one mile of his house. These trees are laced together with innumerable creepers, among which the famous "lawyer-vine" predominates. If it once gets hold of you it will never let go. The track through the scrub is always in deep shade, and consequently hardly ever dries, the feet of the pack-horses soon plough it into deep furrows, and every horse is obliged to step into the same holes as it slips and staggers through the slippery mud. The

A [illegible] EXPOSED BY MOONLIGHT BY A QUEENSLAND LIGHTHOUSE KEEPER. A SNAKE EVIDENTLY CAME TO LOOK AT THE CAMERA DURING THE TWO HOURS IT WAS EXPOSED

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sides of the track have to be carefully avoided as they are lined with the stinging tree *Urtica gigantica,* a giant nettle, twelve to eighteen feet in height, whose sting causes acute pain, which is renewed for some months after whenever the part stung is brought in contact with water. The stinging tree will kill a horse in a few minutes if, as is generally the case, the horse lashes out and gets stung all over the body. Even the dust of the tree is an acute irritant, and a whip touching the tree and then the hand will cause a most painful sting. A smaller variety of the tree grows near Cairns and in other places, but I never saw such large and evil trees as in the Herberton scrub. Like the nettle, it is rare in the untouched ground, but it springs up along tracks that have been used and neglected. Curiously enough, though so fatal to horses (I have known eleven killed by it in half an hour), bullocks will eat and apparently enjoy it. Like the nettle it will not sting if grasped very tightly, but the pain of the sting is so great that one is not often inclined to experiment. The scrub abounds in curious birds, of which those that most strike the traveller are the beautiful lyre- and rifle-birds, the scrub pheasant, the bell-bird with the strange bell-like cry, the whip-bird, whose call the tyro inevitably mistakes for the stock-whip of a distant bullock-driver, and a bird whose cry is exactly like the ringing of a wood-cutter's axe.

Some of the scrub insects grow to a great size. I once found a brown mantis, which measured eleven and a half inches in length and a foot across the wings. The ordinary small mantis of a couple of inches in length is a ferocious creature. I have seen one seize a grass-hopper much larger than itself and proceed to eat it steadily up, commencing with the head. Such a monster as I have described must have been a regular tiger among the insects of the forest. The mantides take very curious shapes; some of them imitate dry

twigs, others grass and straws. I have seen one on an orange-tree which was an exact replica of an orange-tree leaf. They have obtained their name of "praying mantis" from their habit of holding their two front feet, or hands, in the air in front of their very ugly faces, but they are gross hypocrites, and "preying mantis" would suit them very much better.

The sunny openings and outskirts of the scrub swarm with butterflies, and at night with moths of enormous size. Some of the butterflies are of extraordinary brilliancy and beauty, especially the large and small metallic blue butterflies, and both they and the moths are often protectively marked. One very large moth, which rests in the foliage of the trees, has on its wings two enormous eyes exactly resembling those of a cat, and birds give it a wide berth; another has an elongated wing, the markings of which resemble the head and eye of a snake. It is not interfered with.

In the streams, which are perennial, issuing as they do from the cool depths of the jungle, the strange "duck-billed platypus" is still found with his beautiful fur, which has almost led to his extinction, and the curious "tree-climbing kangaroo" was first found within a few miles of Herberton.

There is now a railway to Herberton, but in the days of which I speak communication with the outer world was slow and difficult, especially during the wet season. A theatrical company, which had ventured up to Herberton, was stuck up for six weeks on the banks of Rifle Creek, and Herberton was without supplies for the same period. At last one day the welcome sound of pack-horse bells was heard and the whole population, who had been living on half-pounds of sugar and scrapings of tea-caddies, turned out to welcome some forty loaded pack-horses. When, however, it was discovered that every pack-horse was loaded with grog, the welcomes were turned into anathemas. This is the only occasion

that I remember when the arrival of grog was not welcomed in North Queensland.

Although Herberton was only 17 degrees south of the Equator, its height made the climate very cool, and it was quite a common thing to have the water freeze in one's bedroom. I have seen quite thick ice after midday, and I have sometimes been so stiff with cold in the middle of the day that I could hardly get off my horse. It was a part of my duty to visit and hold services in the little townships within a radius of some fifty miles, and many a long and weary journey I had over the mountains. One of these townships had a working population (there was no other) of twenty men, and these supported somehow the incredible number of six hotels. One man combined a store with his hotel; but even so it is hard to see how they got a living. Another township, long since gone into oblivion, and where there were no police, used to organize races on Saturday night at which men ran down the main street in primeval garb. I had here a little iron house in which I sometimes stayed for a few days while trying to inculcate more conventional methods of dress and demeanour. It was six feet by eight feet, and contained a bed, stove, harmonium, and other luxuries. It had one advantage, for being on the plain beyond the mountains it was very hot, and I was in no danger of oversleeping myself in the mornings. The bed, or rather bunk, ran the six feet way of the house, and being over six feet in height myself, my feet had to rest against the sheet-iron wall which faced east; shortly after sunrise the iron became red hot, or so it used to seem to me, and I hastily got up and out of my "house."

One of the places I visited, Thornborough, was about fifty miles away over the mountains on a wild and desolate track. One day I had to ride over immediately on my return from a long journey, and on the way back

my faithful horse, who thought that I was asking more than a fair thing, settled the matter by quietly lying down. It was dark and I had just heard the blacks, who at that time were supposed to be dangerous, cooeeing round me. I took off my swag and saddle and hung them in a tree, and proceeded on my way on foot after hobbling the horse. Some mile or two farther on I knew there was a Chinamen's garden, the only house on that dreary track, but to get to it I had to cross a river and brave a number of savage dogs, and the fact that the Chinamen, whose garden had been often robbed by the blacks, were in the habit of shooting at the slightest sound. The house was only about two hundred yards beyond the river, so I took off my boots and crossed very gingerly for fear of arousing the dogs, and then approached to a safe distance and lifted up my voice loudly. The Chinamen proved most hospitable and gave me supper, which was welcome, as I had had nothing since breakfast, and I promised them a pound if they would bring in my horse and saddle safely. Both appeared next day with a neat little bill for "12 lbs. sweet potato eaten by the horse." It appears that after I had gone my horse recovered, or thought he had done enough to maintain his right to fair treatment; at any rate he followed on my tracks, broke into the Chinamen's garden and ate the twelve pounds of sweet potatoes aforesaid. I don't know how the Chinamen estimated the amount, but in business matters they are always extremely honest.

My work often brought me home late on Sunday nights over the main Dividing Range, and it was a weird ride. The road passed in one spot through a narrow gorge to which I gave in my own mind the name of Tzal Maveth—the Valley of Death; even on a fairly fine night it was as black as pitch. On the open mountain I remember only one night on which it was quite dark. On that night I could not see the sky nor my hand held

against it. I met a man and stopped to speak to him, but we could neither see the faintest trace of the other, though we were not a yard apart. It added to the difficulty that there were many side tracks which the horse always wanted to take, but which were dangerous on account of the many old mining shafts. I and my horse did once suddenly drop four or five feet, but fortunately it was only into a creek. The night-birds would sound their inexpressibly mournful notes, and a dingo would often follow for miles, rustling through the bushes alongside or padding tirelessly behind.

The true Australian bush has generally a note of sadness, whether by day or by night. By day one is struck by the monotony, the weird and distorted shape of the trees, the absence of animal and bird life, and the universal greyness of the tones, which, however, have a beauty and an interest of their own. The dreariness is increased by the many bush fires which sweep over the country, accompanied by great flights of crows and hawks on the watch for the snakes, lizards, and small animals driven out or caught by the flames.

At night the smouldering logs look like the encampment of a giant army, while sometimes the flames get inside a hollow tree which flares over the surrounding country like a blast-furnace.

The scrub lands are very valuable, the soil being deep and rich, and large areas have now been cleared and settled. The whole region is volcanic, and there are several lakes in the scrub so deep that no bottom has been found. Evidently they are old craters. The timber is now taken away by train, but some thirty years ago about £20,000 worth of cedar was cut by a large firm and taken to the Barron in order to be floated to the sea. For some years there was no big flood, but it came at last. The great logs, four and five feet in diameter, made the plunge over the Fall in safety, but once down there was no stopping them,

and they sailed twenty or thirty miles out to sea, where only a small proportion of them were eventually recovered.

The rich soil, cool climate, and abundance of water made the table-land behind Cairns one of the best agricultural centres in Queensland, and the district is advancing by leaps and bounds. The children are rosy-cheeked and healthy, and the climate all that can be desired. It seems a pity that the glorious scrub should be rapidly becoming a thing of the past, but as long as man lives by bread he must clear the soil. The Queensland Government should surely, however, keep considerable areas of untouched scrub as National Parks, and as a refuge and asylum for the peculiar fauna and flora of the district; for once destroyed it can never be replaced. There is at present an ever-increasing number of visitors who come north to escape the southern winter, but they will not come merely to see flourishing farms where once the giant trees formed aisles of deepest shade, and the gorgeous butterflies flitted in the sun.

There are still large areas of scrub quite untouched, and the reserves should be marked out to be preserved before the devouring desire to raise money by Crown Lands sales comes into play.

CHAPTER III

THE WESTERN PLAINS (1898–1900)

About two hundred miles west of Townsville lies a vast plain, for the most part bare and treeless, but covered with a fine volcanic dust from the long-extinct volcano of Mount Emu, and producing in good seasons great quantities of the beautiful Flinders grass. Unfortunately the seasons are not always good and then the grass turns to powder and blows away, the rare creeks dry up and all is desolation save where a line of rushes marks the course of an artesian bore. The ground is so level that on starting in the morning it is often possible to see the house where one is to stay the night, twenty-five miles away, but apparently within an easy walk. Mirages are of daily occurrence. One sees a pool of water on the road only a hundred yards away, but it ever retreats as one advances. Sometimes one sees great lakes on the horizon with trees and cattle standing in the water, but there is nothing there but the dried-up plain. A few stations dot the wide expanse of the surrounding country, but they are twenty or thirty miles apart, and it sometimes happens that travellers never reach their destination. One such case occurred some years ago. A stockman from Wando Vale Station, in the mountainous country north of the great plain, came upon an old tent, within a few feet of which was the skeleton of a man. In the tent was a map of New South Wales and on the back a letter written in pencil. The letter is so interesting that I gladly avail myself of permission to make an extract from it. There is a quiet heroism

about this poor old swagman, with his patient struggle for five weeks with three days' food, his simple complaint that it takes a long time to die of starvation, and his dim yet real faith in God.

He relates how he travelled from Sydney to Cairns by steamer, and then on foot to Herberton, from which place he journeyed over the mountains, in very wet weather, to Oak Park. Soon after leaving the latter place he lost the track and became hopelessly bushed; he followed a creek for two days, and I give the rest of the letter in his own words.

"The creek was awful rough, and for better walking I left it, then sickness came on, caused probably by exposure, for, no matter how tough a man may be, he cannot be wet through, night and day for more than a month, without feeling the ill effects of it. I pushed on south for a day, then went down a watercourse that ran E. W. N. and S. at first, finally settling down to nearly east. I got seven little sprats at the head of this creek, and followed it in hopes of getting more, but it is very shallow, and I have not succeeded. When I left Oak Park (Feb. 19th) I had with me about three days' tucker. I believe that I have had no food at all now for more than a week, and have lost all energy for saving myself. I have camped to wait for death, hoping that it will not be long coming. It is not pain, only weakness, but it seems hard to die of starvation. I may be found yet before I die, but I do not think that it is likely. Does God answer prayer? If so, how about 'Give us each day our daily bread'?

"Two days have passed and I am still alive; how long it will last I know not. Perhaps assistance may yet come, but I do not think it will. This country is so rough that no one should venture off a main road, for it is just impossible to go straight in any direction. May God, in His mercy, grant that assistance may soon

come, or that there may be a speedy termination to a life of misery. . . . A few more days have passed. I have shifted my camp a mile or two daily. I am so weak that I can only make a few steps at a time, then cast a hopeless glance around me and stagger on a few steps more. Strange that I do not come across any snakes, goannas, or anything eatable; nothing but wild arrowroot, and not much of that, as I cannot climb for it. I have tried to keep my promise not to attempt suicide again, but am very much afraid that the knife may be too great for me to resist. Anyhow my fate is in God's hands. . . . What a long time it takes to die of starvation. I have yet strength to crawl to the creek for water.

"The moon is now past its first quarter, so I suppose it is about March 14th or 15th. I am lying down all day and night thinking of food, no pain, except that my bed might be softer. How much longer life will last I do not know, but it would be a great satisfaction to do so.

"The moon is now in its last quarter. I am too weak to fetch myself more water from the creek, but will try to crawl down there, and small as the quantity of water is try to drown myself. God have mercy on me."

Here the record ends. The body was found near the tent, not near the water, and there were no signs of violence.

The water on the main tracks is caught and held in large dams or "tanks," and these become the rendezvous of all the birds in the neighbourhood. I find a note in my diary, written at a night camp at such a tank. The previous night we had held service in the station store.

"A rough gathering on kerosene-cases and candle-boxes, but a hearty and reverent service. A young man of weak countenance, a lanky companion so born to the saddle that you half expected to see his horse come and sit down beside him, a dry, red-bearded Scotchman, attentive and critical, half a dozen rough-

bearded, unkempt sheep-station hands hailing respectively from Queensland, New South Wales, New Zealand, England, Ireland, and Norway, a burly overseer, all sinews and muscle, a couple of 'bachelors,' and the party from the station house had formed a representative congregation. Not very responsive, not very easy to talk to, but men who thought a good deal more than they appeared to, and with warm hearts under a rough exterior. That night we had to say our office alone, by the banks of the tank where we were camped, the only water for long miles over the dreary rolling downs, that swelled mile after mile, like the endless roll of a giant yellow ocean, with here and there a distant tree like a sail half hidden behind the crest. A thorny acacia, with a small yellow blossom, gave shade from the setting sun, which shone warmly where the great embankment of the dam gave a shelter from the bitter wind, which swept howling over the bare downs with a long-drawn whistling sigh. A solitary 'plain turkey' stalked about in the grass across the water, looking at us with his long neck raised, and his foolish gooselike head, till he rose and flapped his heavy way to a place of greater safety. Then with shrill cries a flock of galah parrots came screaming down, with their livery of grey and crimson flashing in the sunlight; half preened themselves on the bank, while the other half fluttered over the water to drink, poising over one spot instead of drinking as they fly, then, with a pretence of alarm the whole flock would go in a flashing whirl of coloured wings, circle round within a few feet of us, and back again to the bank. Bronze-wing pigeons flew hurriedly down and drank from the edge of the water; great black crows came down for a big drink and an exchange of views on the respective merits of two long-departed bullocks on the other side of the ridge; a magpie whirled briskly by, and a great hawk passed slowly overhead to his perch on a withered tree.

How wonderfully real the Psalms seem when read out in the Australian bush, 'the bullock that hath horns and hoofs,' 'the cattle upon a thousand hills,' 'the noise of the water floods,' 'the deep mire where no ground is,' 'the strength dried and the tongue cleaving to the gums,' 'the springs in the rivers that run among the hills, whereof all the beasts do drink,' 'the rivers that run in dry places,' 'the gasping of a thirsty land,' 'the men astray in the wilderness out of the way, hungry and thirsty, and their soul fainting within them,' 'the rain that maketh the wilderness a standing water and watersprings of a dry ground.' As we read, the sun is setting like a ball of fire behind the hard line of the western down, unbroken by one mark or tree, and the stars begin to shine out above the crimson and green of sunset, and the galahs whirl up in a great cloud, to go whence they came, and our horses clank their hobbles far off in the stillness, and the keen wind blows colder; and we journey to the buggy for coats and rugs and prepare to get what sleep we may, secure in the knowledge that there is not a soul to disturb us, and that if there be, which is doubtful, a snake in the countryside, there is not a bush six inches high that he can hide under. We meant to make an early start, for we had fifty miles to do on the morrow, and nine o'clock found us wooing the sleep which comes to tired travellers, even when their bed is an old sheet of corrugated roofing-iron."

These tanks are of course the great camping-places of the "bullockies," or drivers of the great bullock teams that bring in the wool from the stations to the railhead, carrying many tons piled up on a huge wagon. Often they carry their wives and children with them, and sometimes a few fowls and goats accompany them also.

One day when riding along the road many miles from anywhere I passed two horse teams driven by a heavy-looking boy, a woman, and a girl of thirteen or fourteen

with a flimsy frock down to her knees, bare legs and a man's saddle. I bade the woman good day, and was answered by a stony stare. A little farther on, I passed at some distance a party of half a dozen bullock-drivers at dinner. The good fellows shouted out to me, and sent one of their number galloping after me to ask me to share their meal. I found that the great topic of conversation was the amazing command of foul and profane language exhibited by the girl I had just passed, on the occasion of a refractory horse. Your bullocky is not, usually, at a loss for language in which to express his feelings, but one and all confessed that they were nowhere in it with the girl. Human nature is a strange thing. It was not so much that they were shocked on abstract grounds, but the "unnaturalness," as the chief spokesman put it, of applying such epithets to a *horse*. Had it been a bullock there might have been excuses, for man is weak, and bullocks are known to exasperate a saint, but a *horse*—he shook his head. One wonders what is the teamster's point of view.

The life of a bullock-driver's wife is one of much hardship, but many of them rise wonderfully to the occasion. I spent three years on the western plains and got to know these people well. One day at Charters Towers I was in my study struggling with my Sunday's sermon, when my housekeeper came to tell me that there was a man at the back door who wanted to see me. At the door stood a short, unkempt fellow. He did not speak, but looked up and down and finally round, as if for inspiration, and being an experienced man I knew, from the dumb anxiety, that matrimony was in the air. At length I asked, "Well, what do you want?" "Why, it's just this—my mate here, he's come on a little marrying job." "Where is your mate?" "Oh, he's there," jerking his thumb over his shoulder, "he's behind the tank." "Then he'd better come out," and from behind the sheltering tank slowly emerged a huge

six-foot-two bullock-driver, with a very red face, twirling his hat nervously in his fingers. "So you want to get married?" "Yes, your reverence; to tell the truth, it's just like this. I've been a long trip with my team, and yesterday I got paid in full, £80. Well, I met a friend or two, and I wouldn't say but what we may have had a glass or so of whisky, and last night I thought I'd have a camp in the yard of the hotel, and when I woke up this morning I found that every penny of the £80 was gone, so I thought that the best thing I could do was to go right away and get married, and then next time I get any money perhaps I'll be able to keep it." "And what about the young lady; is she willing to start housekeeping under these circumstances?" "Oh yes, I've got a bag of flour and some tea and sugar on the dray, and a good tarpaulin to go over it; she'll be all right. Her father lives out at R., but she's in town, and we can get fixed up right away." "Why did she leave home?" "Well, you see, her father turned her out of camp. He said she eats too much tucker. She is eighteen, and has a good hearty feeling for her victuals." "Will her father give his consent?" "Oh yes, he says she can get married if she likes, but he ain't going to lose no half-day's work by coming in to the wedding."

The bullocky's jaw dropped and his ruddy face paled when he found that the father's written consent was a *sine qua non*, and his distress was so great that I consented to drive out next day and interview the father. The bullocky was to bring a cab in the afternoon. Long after the hour fixed the man appeared, and with many apologies explained that there had been a mistake with the cabman, but that next day he would appear with the cab without fail. Next day I waited an hour and then went out, and presently came upon the bullocky leaning on a post and gazing up into the sky with the look of a tragic poet. I inquired the cause of his non-appearance, and elicited the truth that he

had not a penny, and that he had been round to every cabman, and had been unable to get one to trust him. Everything seemed against him, and all the world was a waste howling wilderness to his love-sick soul. Finally I was weak-minded enough to reward the constancy of the melancholy swain by hiring a horse at my own expense, and riding out to obtain the father's consent.

At length the happy pair were made one, and before their departure for the honeymoon dray, I suggested to the bridegroom that it would be well if he took the pledge, as an additional safeguard for the future. The bridegroom looked at the bride, and the best man looked at the solitary bridesmaid, and a vision of the borrowed and yet unopened festival bottle of whisky floated before them. "No," said the bridegroom, "I'll take it to-morrow; not to-day, not to-day, anyhow."

Next morning, much to my amazement, bride and bridegroom, bridesmaid and best man, all four trooped up to the Vicarage and took the pledge. Then the sleepy bullocks were yoked up, and the creaking dray with much cracking of the great whip and much language intended only for bullocks' ears, went groaning on its way, and bride and bridegroom were swallowed up in that great sunburnt West, where the wagon formed, from day to day, the only sign of life on the dreary monotonous plain.

Years afterwards when I went to Hughenden, and had a parish four hundred by two hundred miles to look after, I met them again, still inhabiting the dray, with three or four small children to share the bag of flour, but still cheerful and happy.

I used to try different methods of getting round my huge district: one year I drove, another I rode, and the third year I bicycled. All methods had their drawbacks. When I drove it rained and I got bogged up to the axle in a black soil plain, to say nothing of nearly killing

two horses in the effort to get out. An extract from my diary of one of my trips may be of interest:

"*April* 18. Parson and clerk left in a well-laden buggy about 10.30 A.M. Had a long rest in the middle of the day, and arrived at the first station about 4 P.M. Service in the store, with attentive congregation. Our host lends us a big jar to carry water, as the road is very dry.

"*April* 19. Left 9 A.M. Very heavy pulling over soft country with almost invisible road, then along the railway, where a ballast-train livened up the horses. Small and almost deserted township about 3 P.M. After waiting some little time, on again four miles to camping-place at tank. When about half a mile from our destination, one of the wheels suddenly struck work without apparent cause, and refused to revolve. Perspiring amateur wheelwrights work for an hour. At last got wheel off the box, but the box not to be moved. Parson gallantly mounts buggy horse bareback, and rides back to township for assistance, leaving the clerk to look after the movable ecclesiastical property. Parson gets back, very sore and stiff from his eight miles' ride, just after dark, and shortly afterwards the publican, who is the only blacksmith in the township, arrives, and shakes his head over what he pronounces to be an axle bent in the box. Much violent struggling for an hour, by the light of a bicycle lamp, before the box is induced to come off and matters generally straightened up. Friendly publican refuses payment and rides off, and we get under way again, arriving at the tank about 9 P.M. pretty well tired out. Camp under the buggy, and on the road again by 8 A.M. with the prospect of a forty-six-mile stage, and water doubtful. One of the horses rather sick. After twenty miles, reach the only spot where there is supposed to be water, an empty dam. The caretaker has bailed some filthy fluid soakage out of a hole, but has given it up, and is leaving that afternoon in disgust. One horse drinks some of the mess; the

other will not. Camp for an hour, then on again. Horse much sicker, but impossible to stop, as no water to drink except what we have in the jar. At 5 P.M. get to the ten-mile station fence, but horse too sick to go a yard farther. Camp and rest the horses; get a few hours' sleep, but horses too restless with thirst to eat or stop about, and so about 1 A.M. harness up and go on very slowly, in the dark, six miles to a bore stream which crosses the road. Horses drink as if they would drink it dry. Turn out about 4 A.M. and get a couple of hours' sleep, then on again to station in time for breakfast. Are having our full share of the joys of travelling.

"*April* 21. Hearty service in the evening at the station. Glad to rest most of the day.

"*April* 22. Horse still very sick. Our host most kindly lends us a pair of strong buggy horses with which we bowl on our way with minds relieved; reach a small township on the railway after a twenty-four-mile drive, and spend the afternoon in visiting, putting up at the neighbouring station for the night."

When I rode, my horse ate poison bush and died, leaving me to spend a bitterly cold night in a boundary-rider's hut, the owner of which closed every crack and smoked the strongest shag in bed all night. Next day I managed to get to a little bush pub. on an absolutely bare plain without a tree or house for thirty miles round in every direction. It was a small iron shanty with partition walls about seven feet high, so that every word was audible all over the place. Every one of the men camped near was drunk, and they drank and swore all day and all night for the three days I had to stay there waiting for the coach. The publican was most thoughtful and considerate. Outside his bar door he had a heap of sand, and when his customers could drink no more they went out and fell down on the heap of sand and slept until they were ready for another drink. This

experience taught me a considerable amount of sympathy for the publican, whom I confess I had not hitherto regarded with much favour. A man who can stand, all day and most of the night, the utterly meaningless oaths and blasphemy of the habitual drunkard, and his thousandfold meaningless reiteration of the same senseless story or argument, must be possessed of a patience greater than that of Job, and, if he has any brains, he must suffer an amount of mental purgatory which ought to let him off some of his dues hereafter.

On the third occasion I tried a bicycle, and I subjoin a few extracts from my diary:

"*July* 20. Left in the afternoon on a long western journey by bicycle. Great ingenuity required to reduce my luggage, including books and a large water-tin, to 40 lb. in weight and a convenient shape. Short stages for the first three days, visiting and holding service at stations on the river. Eclipse of the moon on 23rd; very interesting sight. Mr. A., who had been camping out, turned up next day. Asked him if he had seen the eclipse. 'Was there an eclipse?' he replied. 'That accounts for it. I woke up last night and found that the moon had set, and as I knew it must be near daylight, I got up and lit the fire and boiled the billy; but I waited and waited for the morning star to get up, and while I was waiting I fell asleep, and when I woke up I found that the moon had risen again, and it puzzled me a great deal.'

"*July* 25. Services at the township in the court-house. Small congregation in morning, but good at night. Left before daylight for B station. Very cold, and road none too good. Got on all right for about fifteen miles, then road very bad, and in addition a violent southerly gale sprang up right ahead. No alternative but to get off and walk twenty-five miles to the station, as there was no house on the road. Lucky I am a good walker. Got in about 5 P.M., rather stiff,

but a cold, very cold, bath put me all right. Took a rest next day, and made a very early start by moonlight the following morning. Sharp frost and very cold. Rode twelve miles before sunrise, then camped and made some chocolate for breakfast. Long lonely ride of fifty miles over the bare open down; not a drop of water anywhere on the road, save what I carried. Camped an hour for lunch, and reached C station about 3 P.M. Service at night, and early start again the next morning. Thirty miles of heavy road, and against the wind, to D station, where I arrived in time for lunch. Service at night, and early start along good road to E. Stayed at the station and visited the little township. In the main street a man came up to me and inquired, taking off his coat as he spoke, whether I was the new policeman. 'You see,' he added, 'I always like to see whether I can fight the new policeman.' I hastened to assure him that I was not a policeman, and that he need not risk a cold by taking off his coat. He apologized very politely for his mistake, and we parted good friends, but as he went away he said that he was sorry that I was not a policeman. Then I went on to the post office, and inquired in the innocency of my heart for some post cards. The young man looked at me severely, and informed me that they did not keep them. 'This office has only recently been opened, and supplies of things like post cards [I felt crushed] have not yet reached us.' I ventured to inquire how long the office had been open, and was told 'only two years.' Verily we are indeed in the bush.

"We had very hearty services morning and evening on the Sunday, in a room most kindly prepared and put at our disposal, and I was off at 6 A.M. on a ride of forty-five miles to F station. The wind was again very strong, but, fortunately, this time astern, and I went along gaily, reaching my destination by lunch-time, and stopping to hold service for the shearers in the woolshed at night.

The morning was intensely cold. At the scour the pipes and shoots were all frozen hard, and work had to be postponed for an hour until they could be thawed. I saw a great lump of ice several inches thick in the middle of the day. And this is tropical Queensland! On again to the little township of G, where I visited, baptized, and held divine service. Here I left my bicycle after a journey of 285 miles, and went on by coach eighty miles to the far western town of H, arriving in time to hold services on the Sunday. About twelve miles from L station, I passed a nameless grave, with a rough fence round it. I remembered that, passing on a former occasion, I had questioned the driver of the coach about it. His reply was terse: 'Chap from K ran away with a man's wife. He overtook him at the gate, and that's his grave.' A nameless, half-forgotten tragedy. On reflection, the tale is somewhat ambiguous. Which of the men filled the grave? I fancy the abductor, for there was an air of conscious virtue about the driver which seemed to say, 'This is how we do justice.' Noticed many fossils in a creek. To judge by the amount of fossil wood, the Western Plains must at one time have been more heavily timbered than at present."

On one occasion, coming down from Mount Emu over the rough basalt road, I broke the back of my bicycle by suddenly dropping down two feet over a boulder. I had nothing to splice it with but a pocket-knife and my bootlaces, and had to ride so for about twenty miles to a station where I got some wood and wire.

In spite of the great heat in summer, when the covers of all your books curl up and you step out of the house into a furnace blast, and the bitterly cold winter winds, the Western Downs form a splendid place to live in, and the people are warm-hearted and self-reliant. My three years of the Plains was a delightful experience.

CHAPTER IV

AN OUTPOST OF THE EMPIRE (1900–1915)

About twenty miles from the extreme northern point of Australia lies a group of islands, of which Thursday Island is, though the smallest, the central and most important. The island, which was my headquarters for fifteen years, is only two miles long and a mile wide, and a considerable portion of it is occupied by two hills, the summits of which are crowned by forts. It is entirely land-locked by the surrounding islands, and is approached by three narrow straits, of which only one is navigable for large vessels. The islands lie on the southern side of the Torres Strait, which stretches for eighty miles to the north, to the coast of Papua. But though the Strait is thus a hundred miles wide it can only be traversed in a few places owing to the countless coral reefs which are to be found everywhere. The widest passage, which has only a clear width for large vessels of seven-eighths of a mile, lies just to the north of this group of islands, and about three miles from Thursday Island. All the traffic from Australia to the East has practically to pass through this narrow strait or else make a long detour to the north of Papua, hence the great and hitherto little appreciated importance of Thursday Island from a naval and military point of view.

After the visit of Luis de Torres in 1606 we hear nothing of the Strait until 1770, when Captain Cook landed on Possession Island, about fifteen miles from Thursday Island, and claimed the whole Strait for the

King. The first settlement in Northern Australia was made in 1824, far to the west, on Melville Island, from which, owing to the hostility of the natives, it was moved to Port Essington on the mainland about a year later. Port Essington was abandoned in 1849, and its place taken by Port Darwin in 1872.

The first settlement in the Torres Strait was on Albany Island, where a company of Imperial Marines was stationed in 1862. In the following year they were transferred to the mainland opposite at Somerset, which became the headquarters of pearling operations. In 1877, owing to the strong tides and bad anchorage, the settlement was transferred to Thursday Island, and placed under the capable administration of the late Hon. John Douglas, C.M.G.

Thursday Island was, and to some extent still is, almost unique among the Australian towns. The population numbers about 700 whites, including a peace-time garrison of 100 gunners, and about 1300 persons of the most varied nationalities under the sun. Mr. Douglas remarked to me when I landed that they had not got a Laplander, but that almost every other nationality was represented.

In spite of the heterogeneous elements, the inhabitants were extraordinarily law-abiding, and but for the historic combat between the South Sea Islanders and the Manila men, disturbances were rare. The struggle referred to arose out of a long-standing grudge between the two parties. Several South Sea Islanders had been stabbed at night, and had accused the Manila men of being the aggressors. Finally, a deputation of South Sea men waited on Mr. Douglas to ask if they might fight their opponents. Report has it that the dear old gentleman, who was rather deaf, understood them to ask that their dispute might be submitted to him at his office, and replied, "Yes, at three o'clock to-morrow afternoon." The South Sea Islanders, who are true

sportsmen, immediately notified their opponents, and turned up the following afternoon to the number of about a hundred fighting men, armed with nothing but their fists. About sixty Manila men appeared, all armed with formidable knives. The South Sea Islanders were nothing daunted, and attacking with their fists soon put their opponents to headlong flight. I heard the battle-cries from my house a few hundred yards away, and coming out on the veranda was astonished to see a man covered with blood from head to foot walking in the direction of the hospital: his companions were relieving their feelings by smashing the windows of a Manila tradesman whom they accused, probably without reason, of supplying the knives. The police happened to be engaged at the other end of the town, and when they arrived all was over. One South Sea Island man was killed and several badly wounded, but the Islanders were satisfied that they had gained a glorious triumph, and were proportionately grateful in their hearts to the quite unconscious magistrate.

The Japanese form the largest element in the alien population, being engaged as divers and crew of the pearling luggers, and entirely monopolizing the work of the six shipbuilding yards where the beautiful and seaworthy luggers are built. They are quite law-abiding as far as the other inhabitants are concerned, but have occasional disturbances among themselves. One morning a Japanese man ran amok with a razor, and mortally wounded two of his compatriots; the doctor was summoned, and while he was examining one of his patients, the alarm was raised that the madman was coming back. The doctor, with great presence of mind, stood so as to be hidden by the opening door, and the man, seeing only his victim, went out again and ran up the steps of a neighbouring house. As soon as the doctor left the house, the man, who had killed a third person in the meantime, ran down the steps, and at the bottom

drew the razor across his own throat, falling dead at the doctor's feet.

It would be extremely difficult to exaggerate the beauty of Thursday Island and its surroundings. The sea takes the most wonderful shades of blue, green, turquoise, sapphire, amethyst, and emerald that I have ever seen, and in addition there is the brown-red of the submerged coral reefs, the pale green of the hidden sandbanks, and the inexpressibly wonderful purples of the cloud shadows ever moving and harmonizing with their changing background.

In every direction there are countless islands, large and small, of varied shapes and vegetation. During and after the wet season, which lasts from Christmas to the end of March, and during which an average of 60 inches of rain falls, the islands are of a brilliant emerald green, which contrasts with the dark green of the trees, but later in the year they show all shades of red and yellow, broken only by the grey granite rocks.

Everywhere are reefs, sometimes stretching brown and bare for a dozen miles, and fringed by a long line of white foam, where the great rollers, driven before the south-east monsoon, break in thunder on the coral barrier, sometimes covered with five or six feet of water, and forming an ever-present peril in fine weather to the anxious sailor, who tries in vain in a light breeze to resist the pressure of the tremendous tides which swirl through the passages, sometimes at the rate of eight knots an hour, and carry him helplessly towards the never far-distant reefs.

It is well worth while to land on the lee side and have a closer look at these reefs at low water. The living coral is mostly of a reddish brown colour, but in places it is exactly of the colour of red sealing-wax or a brilliant blue enamel. Anemones of every kind flower in the pools. Looking down from the edge of the reef you see great trees of seaweed, fifteen or twenty feet high, waving

great arms in the tide water; and in and out among the branches swim blue, scarlet, green, and purple parrot-fish, like birds flitting about in a tree. In rough weather it is well to give the reefs a wide berth if you can. The remains of many a good ship mark the course of the Great Barrier Reef and the "Long Reefs" of the Strait. The saddest case was the wreck of the R.M.S. *Quetta* on February 28, 1890. She was carrying home on a visit to the Old Country a number of the best-known and respected families of Brisbane, and at 9 P.M. was passing between Albany Island and Mount Adolphus. A concert was being held on deck when she struck an isolated and uncharted pinnacle of rock. The ship drew twenty-six feet, and the rock was twenty-three feet from the surface, so that the bottom was ripped out from bow to stern. In four minutes the ship was under water and half her crew and passengers drowned. One girl of sixteen, Miss Lacy, after losing her sister and relinquishing her share of a grating to the purser, who could not swim, swam about for thirty-six hours before she was picked up. The beautiful little Cathedral Church at Thursday Island was built in memory of those who were lost, and contains many interesting relics. In front of the altar hangs the ship's riding lamp. This was brought up after sixteen years at the bottom of the sea, and still retains its original glass and fittings. It needed only cleaning and a new wick. It was difficult to get the ship's bell loose, and the captain of the salvage schooner accordingly fastened it to the ship's stern at low water. As the tide rose the schooner was dragged down so low in the water that the captain was on the point of cutting the rope when the bell came away. It now hangs outside the Cathedral. After being eighteen years under water, some two hundred casks of tallow were raised quite uninjured and looking as if they had just been loaded. They continued their interrupted voyage to London from Thursday Island. About

seventeen miles to the west of Thursday Island out in the open sea is the little rocky Island of Booby. On the occasion of my first visit the lighthouse men met us in their whale-boat, and rowed us along the fine jagged cliffs full of caves, around which the sea-gulls flew screaming as we passed; the water was beautifully clear, and we could see all the stones in the reef as we passed over it. The island is less than a quarter of a mile in length and breadth, and about sixty feet high, the top being a bare rocky plateau, breaking away into tumbled cliffs hollowed out into caves, and forming half a dozen narrow little sandy coves where a landing can be effected. A cleft in the rock, some fifty or sixty feet wide, runs across the island, and is filled with shady trees and shrubs, forming a grateful shade and contrast to the glare on the naked rock above. Immediately on landing we went to visit the famous post-office cave, where vessels used to leave letters to be called for by some homeward-bound ship, and where stores and water were left for shipwrecked men. The water-supplies, had any one explored the rocky plateau, would have been found to be unnecessary, as there are two natural cisterns in the rock, one about ten feet deep and holding about 4000 gallons, and the other smaller. These are filled in the wet weather from the rain falling on the rock, and last all the year round; but it is the last place one would think of looking for water, though the same kind of wells are to be found in the dry mountains of Central Australia, the water being cool in the hottest weather. In the cave, which runs in some eighty feet, are numerous inscriptions, dating back to 1849, but many are nearly obliterated.

Life on the island must be a very lonely one, but happily the three families seem to live peaceably together, which does not always happen in such cases.

One of the best-known islands in the group is Friday Island, where South Sea Island and other lepers were

confined until 1907. It so happened that my first duty on arriving at Thursday Island was to visit the leper station to administer the Sacrament to a dying leper, and I felt thenceforth a deep interest in these unhappy people. They were at that time brought up in wooden cages to the island and regarded with a dread quite unwarranted by this disease, which is not at all to be feared if a few most simple and obvious precautions are taken. I used to visit and hold services for them as often as I could. Among the most intelligent of them was a half-caste aboriginal named Tom Moreton. I asked him to teach some who were desirous of being confirmed. Two notes of visits I paid to these people may be of interest:

"On January 14, 1906, we were off at 7 A.M., *en route* for Friday Island, where I had told the lepers to expect me, having been down on Friday night with the doctor to take a funeral, a weird scene in the darkness. We had to anchor a long way out, as the bay is very shallow, and I had a somewhat lumpy pull ashore in the dinghy. After a service in which the responses and singing were most hearty and inspiring, I had out in front the fourteen candidates for confirmation, and examined them. Tom Moreton had undertaken to teach them from a simple catechism on the subject. I listened to the answers as they went steadily through the first half of the book, and was amazed at the accuracy with which they had learned everything. Slow as they are to learn and memorize, it must have meant immense and constant labour for all these poor fellows to have learnt perfectly (but for a few long and hard words) some forty or fifty answers, some of considerable length. I warmly praised both teacher and scholars, and promised to return before long to hear the rest of the catechism and to arrange for the confirmation. It was a touching sight to see all these men absorbed in worship under the

spreading shade of a great india-rubber tree, with a background of beach and dancing water, and blue distant islands, to think of them as prisoners doomed to a speedy and terrible death, while over their heads I could see the roofs of Thursday Island only four miles away, and the smoke of a great steamer and a forest of masts and all the signs of free and busy life. It was interesting to notice the change in the men themselves. When I first used to hold services and preach down there, the congregation used to come untidy in rags and squalor. Now each man was shaved and clean and dressed in his best and neatest clothes, making even the ravages of disease seem less noticeable."

In the following year the Government determined to remove the Friday Island lepers to a new home near Brisbane, and as they were to leave early in June I determined to go down and say good-bye and give them the Holy Communion for the last time. I had twice fixed a day to go down by the police boat, but was hindered in the first instance by the unexpected arrival of the Governor-General, and in the next instance by the sudden and unexpected death of two residents of Thursday Island. On the following day I arranged to go down in the *Francis Pritt*, which had returned the previous day from a stormy voyage to the Mitchell River Mission. It was blowing very hard, but I did not like to disappoint them again, and so went on board about 11 A.M. Owing to the strong wind and the shallowness of the bay we were obliged to anchor about a mile from the shore, but it was a matter of a few minutes to reach the shore in the dinghy before the wind.

"The strong wind made it impossible to hold the service under the usual tree, so we adjourned to a grassy spot under the lee of one of the buildings where a washing-bench covered with a fair linen cloth served as an altar.

The communicants, fifteen in number, were all standing in a line on the grass, with the non-confirmed Christians in the rear. The service opened with a hymn, and all joined with the greatest earnestness in the Creed and Confession. The reverence with which the Sacred Elements were received was remarkable. I only wish there were always such devotion on the part of white communicants; and the *Gloria in excelsis* was a real hymn of praise. I felt the contagion of their faith and gratitude, and could more easily realize the presence of Christ in the midst there under the sky, with the background of the green hills, than in many a stately church. After the service I spoke a few words of farewell, telling them that it had been a great happiness and a privilege to minister to them, in however small a way, for the last seven years, and telling them what a joy it had been to me when the doctor of his own accord said to me, 'Those boys are quite different men since they took to the Church. No more complaining and no more quarrelling among themselves.' Tom Moreton replied for the lepers, bidding me an affectionate good-bye, and thanking the Church for its ministrations to them; and then the poor lepers gave me the only offering that it was in their power to give. They sang with real feeling and earnestness 'God be with you till we meet again.' I took leave of them, feeling that it closed a relationship which had been one of much happiness to me, and I hope of some comfort to them. They proposed to take with them their church bell to their new home.

[I am glad to say that the spiritual needs of the lepers are well cared for in that new home. A few years ago Tom Moreton recovered so much that he was offered his liberty, but as he had a nephew who was a leper on the island he decided not to leave him, and still remains at the Lazaretto.]

"We had a very stiff pull back to the ship in the teeth of the gale, the little dinghy dancing like a cork on the

waves, and drenching us with spray. On board the *Francis Pritt* it was not very much better, and I ate my dinner on deck in the intervals of dodging waves, getting back to Thursday Island about 3 P.M."

An account of a visit in 1903 to Deliverance Island may give some idea of the sea surroundings of Thursday Island. This island is about eighty miles to the north-west at the western entrance to the Strait. I went out with the Harbour Master in a 10-ton cutter, fast, but very wet in such weather as we experienced. After visiting several islands we inspected a swimming diving fleet at Turnagain, a low, uninhabited, mangrove-covered sandbank, where we spent the night. The morning was rough and boisterous, and for some distance we ran south to avoid a great reef which lay in our way. On clearing it we ran to the west, before the wind, over a nasty and confused sea. Our destination was, we knew, a very low island, and we expected to sight it about noon, but an hour and a half more passed before Mr. B. made it out. It is, we afterwards discovered, twelve miles west of its place on the chart. As we approached we could see a forest of masts behind a long sandbank running to the south-west, and also behind another bank, some six miles south, and dignified with the name of Ker Island. The sandbank seemed endless, but at last we rounded it and ran up to the fleet, gunwale under, at tremendous speed. There were four schooners and their fleets of about eighty luggers under Deliverance, and another schooner and fleet under Ker Island. Anchored in a long line to leeward, they resembled the pictures of the fleets in the good old days of naval warfare. We anchored and went on board one of the schooners, and later in the afternoon went on shore in a whale-boat. If any one wants an exhilarating quarter of an hour, I can confidently recommend an open whale-boat beating up against a strong wind, ballasted

by half a dozen South Sea Islanders standing on the weather gunwale, and sailed by a fleet captain who is conscious that he is the cynosure of all eyes. It cannot be described as either monotonous or dry. The island was inhabited by a civil old German, a regular Robinson Crusoe. He had been there for twelve years, and had not even a boat, though he sometimes was six months without a visitor. His family consisted of five dogs, a dozen Muscovy ducks, and eighty cats, for whom he daily killed a turtle. I have often wondered what would happen to him if he were ill and unable to feed the cats. Would they eat him?

We did not get off next day till 10 A.M., when we ran north-east in a stiff wind until close to the coast of New Guinea, which is here low and uninteresting. About five miles from land we stood to the south, and an hour or so later had an anxious time among the shoals and banks which run north-east from Deliverance to Boigu. The water was so thick that it was impossible to see a shoal until you were on it, and the lead had to be kept constantly going and the course frequently altered. It was a relief to get into deeper water about 3 P.M., although as we went south the sea got worse and worse until we ran north-east again, and got into rather quieter and shallower water, where we had to anchor in the open, as in looking for the shelter of a reef in the dark we might have got on to the top of it. We did not have a very pleasant night, as the sea was high; and it was still blowing next morning when we again stood to the south over what the chart describes as "unexamined coral reefs." It was 10 A.M. before we sighted our destination, Maubiag Island, some ten miles to windward, but tide and sea were against us, and it was nearly 6 P.M. before we succeeded in beating up to the dangerous reef, about three miles from shore (which we had only just barely light to traverse), while it was long after dark when we anchored close to shore on the north-east corner of the

island, having been two days in beating some forty miles to windward, a long time for such a fast little boat.

It will be seen that Thursday Island, with its tides and reefs and few and easily blocked channels, is a point of enormous strategic importance, and it was a matter of common knowledge that the reefs are far better known to, and charted by, the Japanese than by the Admiralty.

As the first and last port of call between Australia and Java, Borneo, the Philippines, China, and Japan, it is of value in many ways, and will be increasingly so in the future as the volume of trade and shipping steadily grows.

It was from Thursday Island, appropriately enough, that H.M.A.S. *Sydney* sailed on August 7, 1914, cleared for action, and leaving behind her boats and furnishings, on that long ocean quest which ended when she met the *Emden, en route* for Australia, at the Cocos Islands.

Some day it will be one of the most important and most strongly guarded outposts of the Empire.

CHAPTER V

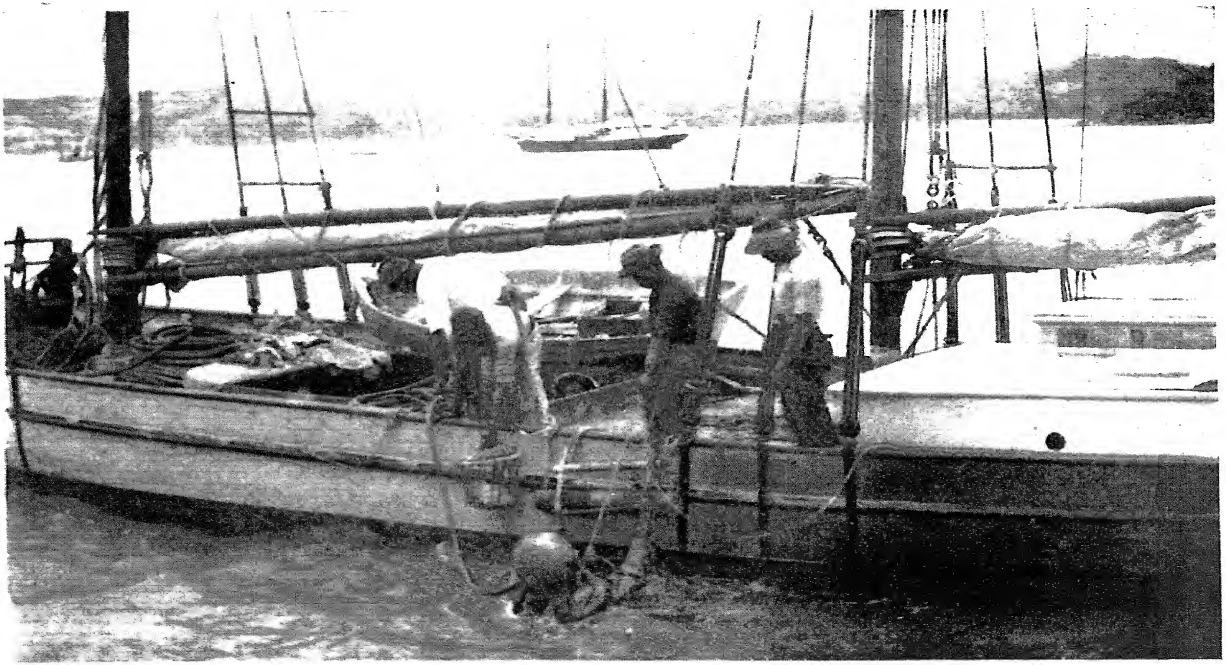
PEARL-SHELLING IN TORRES STRAIT

Lieut. K. O. Mackenzie, whose long practical acquaintance with the subject as a resident sheller in the Torres Strait, keen interest, and powers of observation make him an authority, has kindly contributed the following chapter on Pearl-Shelling in Torres Strait.

THE obtaining of mother-of-pearl shell from the sea is the primary industry of Torres Strait, with headquarters at Thursday Island. It is generally referred to as pearl-fishing, or pearling, and therefore it is naturally thought that pearls are the only object of enterprise, whereas pearls are a by-product only.

The divers of shelling boats have been drawn from almost all the races which go to sea. The natives of the Pacific Islands, especially Samoa and Rotuma, also the Philippine Islands and the Malay Archipelago, have supplied most divers in the past. Whites first instructed these people in the methods of machine (air-pump and dress) diving. White divers generally employed a mixed coloured crew. As time passed and shell became more difficult to obtain, through the thickly strewn beds or patches being thinned, deeper diving became necessary, and diving farther afield over greater areas and more in the open sea. The white divers first retired, and almost all the above-mentioned races have given way to the Japanese.

They are sturdy, and for generations have been brought up to the sea, as they are recruited from the fishing class in Japan, and find the hardships of climate changed in



DIVING FOR PEARL SHELL.

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Torres Strait to conditions of comfort and pleasure. Their fatalism gives them complete confidence in sea-diving work.

On December 31, 1913, the following was the number of men afloat, employed on ships' articles of agreement at Thursday Island Shipping Office, under the Pearl Shell and Bêche-de-mer Fishery Acts:

Europeans	7
Philippinos	21
„ indented	1
Japanese	56
„ indented	599
Mainland natives	159
Malays	6
„ indented	76
Papuans	132
South Sea Islanders	45
Torres Strait Islanders	190
Other nationalities	8
	1300

On February 28, 1914, the population of Thursday Island, excluding the men in above list on articles, was as follows:

Nationality	Adults		Children		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Europeans	313	176	82	91	662
Japanese	196	27	4	5	232
Chinese	58	9	9	12	88
Philippinos	22	6	—	3	31
Malays	30	1	6	7	44
Torres Strait natives	37	38	21	12	108
Mainland natives	7	9	1	—	17
South Sea Islanders	8	—	—	—	8
Mixed races	37	47	56	142	282
Cingalese	11	—	—	—	11
	719	313	179	272	1483

Pearl shell found in Torres Strait varies much in quality, according to the nature of the sea-bottom and the water in which it grows. Shell from the Papuan coast, along the north side of the Strait, is small and stunted in growth, and of a less hard substance, becoming almost chalky on the backs when dry. This shell is much riddled on the backs by borers. These borers live within a shell which is an oval bivalve, and dissolve the mother-of-pearl as by a strong alkali. They commence with microscopic size under the edges of the layers of growth on the backs of the pearl shell. They increase in size till about one and a half inches by half an inch, when they succeed in killing the pearl-shell oyster. The hole made into the pearl shell is solely for the accommodation of the borer. Inside his shell the mother-of-pearl-shell oyster has been busy keeping the borer out by building a layer of nacre over him till what is termed a blister is formed.

Shell found in or about coral-reef bottom is hard and of good quality, although subject to these borers. Shell along the east coast of York Peninsula is very like the Papuan coast shell, but is much larger and heavier when full grown. The deep-water shell of Darnley Island waters is really a reef shell. The best quality is found on what is known as the old ground, which covers the area over the western approach to Torres Strait. The sea-bed, affected by the waste from the coast and by discharge from rivers, appears to affect the quality of the mother-of-pearl shell. The beautiful colouring of the pearl shell is divided into two general classes: white or silver-lipped and gold or orange-lipped. The white-lipped shell is the natural shell without the gold-lip colouring. The latter colouring extends over the entire back of the shell, penetrating a more or less shallow distance into the nacre, and then right to the thin outer edge, hence "lip." Gold-lip shell is some pounds sterling per ton of less value commercially than silver-lipped.

Definite and scientific knowledge of the mother-of-pearl shell, in its creation, habits, growth, and peculiarities, is very small. The correctness of its classical name, *Meleagrina margaritifera,* is questioned.

Private enterprise has spent thousands of pounds in scientific research by conchologists, who have collected chicken shell and transferred it to cultivation beds. Data and information remain with those who have paid for it, but the obvious fact is that there has been no commercial discovery improving the handling or cultivation of the mother-of-pearl oyster.

The mother-of-pearl is a bivalve. Its average grown weight is about five to seven pounds. It first grows in a disk-like shape, and then thickens by growth on the inside of each valve until it is about eight to ten inches in diameter, measured across from the hinge. Each valve is about an inch in thickness in the middle, and each is hollowed in shape on the inside, and rounded on the outside, and tapering away to a thin edge all round its extremities, except along the hinge. The space between the valves would be about an inch to an inch and a half in the middle, tapering away to the meeting of the outer edges and hinge of the two valves. The hinge, or base, is some five to six inches long and a straight line. Imagine a bivalve shell standing on its base or hinge, and the side of the disk towards you, showing a notch or indent just above the left side of the hinge, then the outline of disk from this notch would tend away at more than a right angle with the base, forming a sweeping curve round—closing in a little, and then meeting at an angle greater than a right angle the other end of the base or hinge. With the notch to the left, the valve towards you is always more hollow by about half an inch than the valve away from you. They are known as "hollow and flat" sides: or "lefts and rights," when shell is placed edge towards you, the notched edge being farthest away. The back of each

shell, or valve, is covered with a brownish substance, something like hard horn, which becomes very brittle after exposure to the air. This brown substance ends in concentric rings radiating from the base near the notch. One ring extends under the other till finally the last one forms the lip or outer edge of the valves. The outer edges of these rings near the lip have protuberances like small extended finger-nails, which, as the shell extends in growth, break off. The outer edge of the nacre of the valves is surrounded by about an inch of this brown lip. The general thickness of this brown covering on the back, ending in the lip, is about a sixteenth of an inch. The healthy adult shell probably produces some thousands of eggs a year, but the percentage which mature is small. The egg is supposed to float about on the surface of the sea and hatch there, the young microscopic bivalve, which has a root like a small bunch of greenish-coloured fibre, called a byssus, sticking out of it, with which it catches and holds on to any object as it is carried along in the sea. It then feeds on the microscopic animal and vegetable forms in the passing waters of the coral sea. It lets go if the surroundings are not suitable, and, drifting on, again catches hold of something, such as some marine growth, a leaf of a marine plant, a rock, or a stone, etc., and so on, growing and shifting about where the tidal stream takes it till it finally holds on to the sea-bed and remains there if it finds the locality suitable. At first it stands up on its base, held fast by its byssus to the sea-bottom. Then the time comes when its weight through growth keeps it a fixture on one side on the sea-bed. It has selected its locality for the rest of its life. The root or byssus, which was part of the body of the oyster, dies or withers away. The notch described above is where the byssus came out between the valves. The age of the shell at this stage is generally said to be about five years. If the bottom is of a soft nature the constant outward

rush of expelled water by the sudden drawing together of the valves by the oyster when startled, cuts away a concave space like a shallow wash-hand basin, wherein the shell rests. The shell lying on the bottom is difficult to see, as its back or upper side (it invariably lies on its "flat" side) becomes covered with a variety of marine growth exactly like the sea-bed adjacent to it. Thus it is very difficult, particularly for the uninitiated diver, to find the shell. Sometimes the shell is scattered about the bottom, which is covered with a growth of marine grass, two or three feet high, which naturally protects it. The silt on the bottom in many places where shell is found is very easily disturbed, mixing up with the water, rising in it, and clouding it like a fog to such an extent that the diver cannot see. The ground swell does this also, and the tidal stream then carries the cloudy water to places sheltered from the swell, so that sometimes for many miles in all directions the sea is quite milky, and finding shell then on the bottom is impossible. When the shells are brought to the surface they are opened with a knife like a table-knife, but with a larger handle. The oyster is examined for any pearls in it and then thrown away. It is edible, but very coarse. The bivalves are separated, the brown lips being cut off with a heavy knife, and the backs chipped, removing all marine growth. The shells or valves are then scrubbed and stacked to dry. When dry they are weighed, and their net weight is credited to the diver who found or obtained the shell. It is then packed in a mixed or assorted state. Packing requires a deal of practice and skill. The cases employed contain about seven cubic feet of space and hold about two and a quarter hundredweight of shell.

The law prohibits the pulling up of young shell, under five inches in diameter from base to lip of nacre. Formerly it was six inches, but some years ago the size was reduced.

In grading, shell is sorted as follows:

AA	Chicken	5–6 inches
A	,, ...	6–7 ,,
B	Clean, bold, or stout. .	6–7 ,,
C	Mature, without fault .	7 inches and up
D	Grubby-backed . .	all sizes
E	Defective faces, backs .	,,

This is known on the London Market as country sorted. For many years the sales of mother-of-pearl shell have taken place by auction in London every two months, attended by buyers from all countries, the same as the wool sales and sales of other world's produce. New York buyers buy shell at times from shelling centres direct, in opposition to the London market. The question of market speculation and controlling of prices is a very thorny subject with shellers and buyers of shells.

Statistics of value and quantity of shell and pearls exported are found upon analysis inaccurate. An illustration: mother-of-pearl shell shipped to another port, such as Sydney, for transhipment or reshipment there to London or New York, is not credited by the Customs to its port of original export, but to Sydney, its final port of export.

The value of pearl shell has fluctuated from some £80 and £90 to between £200 and £300 per ton. Isolated parcels of best quality shell have sold for £100 odd per ton in London, and, similarly, inferior shell, with a bad market, has sold at some £40 per ton.

Customs records show that, for the years 1896 to 1900—i.e. five years—5633 tons of mother-of-pearl shell were exported, valued at about £110 per ton. The catch of shell has declined, as the five years 1909 to 1913 similarly show 2431 tons, valued at about £181 per ton. This latter quantity, for the reason mentioned above, would be more correctly about 3000 tons. These two

periods are five years before Federation, and the last five years' available figures.

Pearls can only be dealt with on values declared at the Customs, and as the handling of pearls is under loose regulation, nothing like accurate figures are really available. The values of pearls exported declared by exporters to the Customs for recent years are as follows: 1910, £1620; 1911, £12,151; 1912, £6333; 1913, £8265. In the early days more pearls are said to have been found than in late years, thus creating a theory among practical shellers that virgin beds of shell were more pearl-bearing than the disturbed or worked patches with only young shell growing. Yet a gem is often found in a comparatively young growing shell. The pearl is recognized as being caused by a parasite whose host is first a small fish before it passes to the mother-of-pearl oyster and causes the growth of the pearl. Pearls are found in the flesh, or just within the skin, in or about any part of the mother-of-pearl oyster. They may be divided into baroque pearls and gems. The first are common and mostly small, of all manner of shape, size, and grotesque form. Pearls, particularly gems, are rare. The latter are usually found about the outer parts of the oyster, and just under the skin of its tender parts, so that as the gem grows by being built up by successive layers of nacre, so the time arrives when the oyster, startled, drawing his shell together, ruptures the flesh or skin covering the pearl by the sudden movement, and the released pearl passes out on to the sea-bed and soon rots away, being reabsorbed in the sea-water and sea-bed. Sometimes the pearl falls within the shell and lodges between the body of the oyster and the shell, when it becomes attached to the wall of the shell as layers of nacre are added, and so becomes a lump there, called a blister pearl. When this is found, speculation exists as to the value of the pearl within, whether it is more valuable to cut the blister off, showing

its outer surface as a pearl, or to open the blister and expose the pearl. Sometimes the blister discloses a piece of foreign substance from the sea-bed, or a small crab or some kind of small shell, which has been suddenly washed into the oyster. Two intruders are commonly found living within the body of the shell oyster—namely, a small soft brown crab, round in general shape, and about half an inch in diameter, and accompanying it a small red lobster about an inch long.

Every good pearl or gem has its own individuality or special features, and it is as difficult to match two pearls as it is to match two human beings.

Massive, irregular, and imperfect pearls are sold to best advantage in India and the East. Pearls or gems of quality go to Europe, through the markets of London and Paris.

Turtle crack the young pearl shell up to about six inches diameter, eating the oyster, and in its very young state pearl shell is a food for some kinds of fish, so that it has many enemies.

Mother-of-pearl shell is said to have been first reported as being found in Torres Strait by Captain Dawson and his mate, who passed through Torres Strait in a schooner bound from Sydney to West Australia. They did not, however, obtain any. It was first collected on the Woppa Reef in 1869, when Captain Banner, trading with a schooner from Sydney for Mr. Merriman, gathered some five tons and took it to Sydney as a sample. In 1870 he made a special voyage from Sydney to the Woppa Reef, obtaining some seventy-five tons, which was sold in Sydney to Mr. Dickenson at £50 per ton. Another voyage was undertaken in 1871, but on the return the vessel was wrecked. It is stated, however, the owners were paid, under their open insurance policy, for fifty tons of shell. The extensive Woppa Reef lies in the north-east part of Torres Strait, extending nearly north and south, and separated from Daru and Bristow

Islands on the Papuan coast by Missionary Passage, and terminating in Tute, Dungeness, and Mangrove Islands. It is intersected by narrow passages. The charted name of this reef, taken from the name given to the island of Tute, is Warrior, because the natives put off in their canoes to attack a surveying warship anchored there (probably H.M.S. *Rattlesnake*) about 1848. The result was disastrous to the natives, but they were game and without fear. Captain Banner again visited the Woppa Reef in 1872, but died there, and was buried on Tute (Warrior) Island.

Pearl shell was first found by wading and swimming on the reef at low tide, and without doubt the first traders to Torres Strait and New Guinea saw the natives with pearl shells and pearl-shell ornaments. Mother-of-pearl shell appears to be spread over the coral seas wherever the sea-bottom is suitable for it. There is a variety of mother-of-pearl shell known as black lip, but the shell is smaller, being from three to five inches in diameter, and it is mostly found in the shallow water on the coral reef. An exception to this size occurs at Tahiti, where the black-lip shell is almost the same size as the large mother-of-pearl shell, *Meleagrina margaritifera*.

Pearl-shellers followed, and made settlements or stations at convenient islands, employing the natives as swimmers, working one or more small sailing vessels. Somerset, in Albany Pass, was founded about 1864, and became the headquarters for pearl-shellers and traders to connect with shipping passing through Torres Strait. It was found that Somerset was not suitable as a port. The tide through Albany Pass, being strong and the bottom foul, caused difficulty and trouble to the sea-borne traffic. Thursday Island, the centre of the Prince of Wales Group, with a more suitable harbour, was selected to be made the port, and was founded as Port Kennedy in 1877, being officially established on New

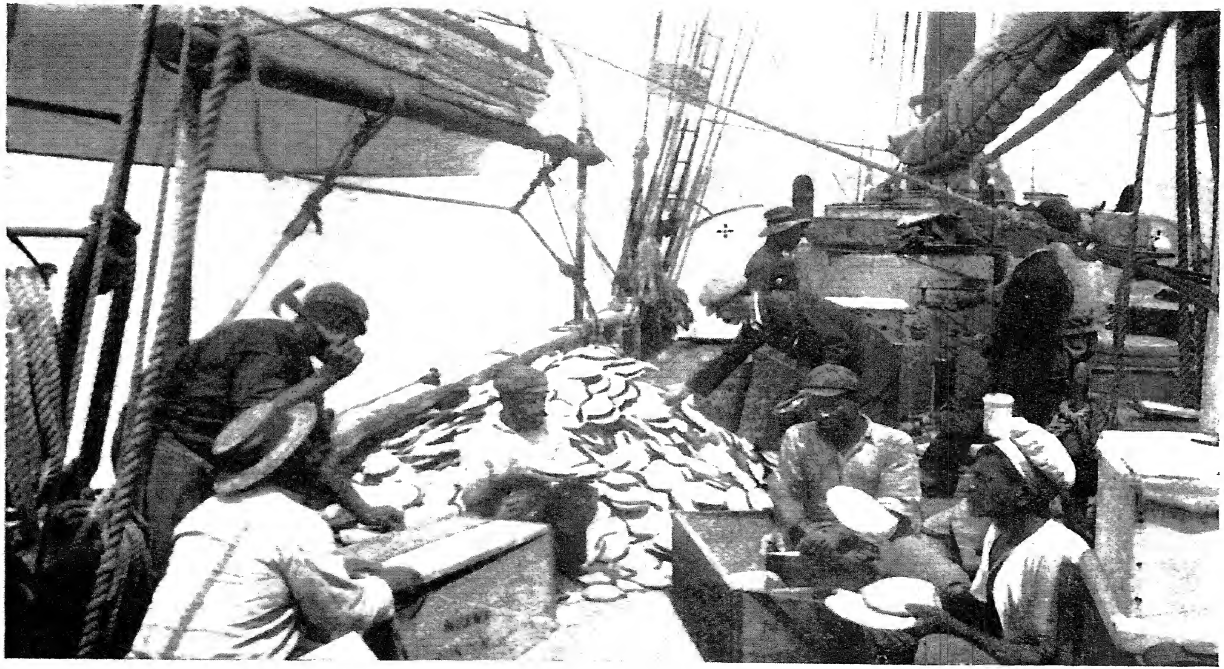
Year's Day, 1878. The pearl-shellers were mostly scattered about, with their stations on the various islands of the Strait. Maubiag (Jervis Island) was notable as a settlement, and for very many years has been the natural base for swimming stations, as the shallow and reef-strewn waters adjacent to it cover an extensive area. In 1914 the Wyben Pearling Company were the only pearl-shellers working from there having a fleet of swimming cutters. On Nagheer (Mount Ernest Island) a small swimming station was working about three boats, founded by James Mills, a Samoan. Mills died in 1915, and is about the last of a typical class of coloured man representing the early days of Torres Strait. He was trained in boyhood by the London Mission Society. He took to the sea and had been bos'n of several ships, and had been to most of the world's ports. He stood six feet two inches, well and powerfully built, a born trader, having a marked personality, and spoke in the vernacular some eight languages.

The method of collecting the pearl shell was improved by the introduction of the diving dress and air-pump, and this marked a difference between diving boats (machine) and swimming (naked divers) stations.

The diving boat, with its mechanical outfit, was a small vessel of about five to seven tons with two masts, carrying a jib and two standing lug sails, making it a lugger. The diving boats of the present day average fifteen to seventeen tons, and are ketch-rigged, but the old name of "lugger" is still in general use.

The swimming boat has, in most cases, been the cutter from the smallest size to about five tons.

These stations were the headquarters of the individual sheller, working any number of boats, say three to twelve. The station was the rendezvous. The boats, with all supplies—such as provisions, water, firewood, and gear—crews, and diver or swimmers aboard, would go out to



PACKING PEARL SHELL FOR SHIPMENT TO LONDON

work the clear water. That means dive for shell with fine weather and slack tides. They would not return to the station except for sickness or accident till conditions prevented diving. Clear water set in with neap tide and fine weather. Occasionally water would remain clear through springs and neaps to next spring. Neaps are often spoiled for diving by water becoming dirty, as already explained. The boats, under such circumstances, returned to their stations, where the shell was landed, and the divers credited with their results. The rate of pay was generally a fixed sum per 100 shell, but in latter days it has been a fixed sum per ton weight of cleaned shell. All sorts of statements are made as to the depths swimmers dive and depths dived in a dress. Expert swimmers will work in five to six fathoms, but three to four fathoms is good diving for swimmers working. They will, however, always quote the best depths. The average dress diving now is anything from six and seven fathoms to fifteen and twenty fathoms. This covers what is termed shallow-water diving. Deep-water diving ranges from this to thirty fathoms and more in a few individual cases.

Shelling operations have been carried on from "floating stations" instead of from shore bases—a schooner of some 100 tons being used as a parent or store ship, and a fleet of twelve to fifteen diving boats directed and managed from her. This enabled greater control and concentration of work in all ways; regular collecting of shell from the boats as it was raised by the divers, also securing the pearls or lessening the chance of their being stolen aboard the diving boat. (Stealing pearls is done without removing the oyster, by placing the shell on deck in the sun, when it opens; then keeping the valves separated by inserting an object while feeling the oyster with the fingers for a pearl and then extracting it.) Under this floating system the fleets rarely came into port, but lay or sheltered as necessary some-

where out among suitable island or reef anchorages, a constant service by a tender being maintained between the fleet and Thursday Island, thus carrying out stores, gear, and men, and bringing back the shell packed ready for export, while time-expired men, sick men, and men on leave went to and fro.

At Christmas-time the general lay-up and pay-off and re-engagement took place, when almost all hands were sent into Thursday Island. Then a period of about six weeks' festivity, enjoyment, and a reckless spending of their wages took place, accompanied by a general breaking of last year's resolutions. The simple man of the sea, be he coloured or white, always in ending his voyage makes resolutions as to what he will do this time, and how he will spend his money, etc., but, alas, when he comes in contact with the shoreman and his lines of civilization, he fails again. The storekeepers of Thursday Island were very much opposed to the floating-station system, but investigations by the Government showed the alleged abuses did not exist.

By a natural process of evolution the floating system has ended in Torres Strait for the present, anyway, and shelling is conducted from the shore again. This time, not from those stations scattered about the islands, but from the business office desks of Thursday Island. This, of course, clearly shows more dependence upon, and trust put into, the divers' hands in operative or practical shelling. The diving boats fit out for periods of three months, but return to port as need be between refits. The diver and crew draw their money and have a financial settlement at each refit, so that the annual pay-off and excitement at Christmas-time is past, though it is generally made the principal refit of the year, with a holiday. As direct control cannot be exercised over the diver, who is comparatively as much an autocrat in his fifteen-ton vessel as the old-time sailing-ship master, the diver is paid a lay wage on his catch of shell, approach-

ing almost £100 per ton, according to amount of catch. From this is deducted the actual cost of provisions and crew's wages, the diver having the exclusive right to pearls found, which he sells to the highest bid from buyers ashore. The Japanese diver, on principle, never takes his pearls to his employer to buy.

The risks of machine diving are shown as follows:

Year	Number of divers	Deaths from paralysis	Per-centage	Deaths by accident	Per-centage
1909	149	8	5·36	4	2·68
1910	158	14	8·86	1	0·63
1911	187	21	11·22	0	—
1912	198	17	8·58	1	0·50
1913	172	7	4·06	2	1·16

Diving apparatus has been improved in recent years in minor ways by application of experience, but the greatest advance is the motor-driven air-pump, or compressor, now in use, the air being pumped and compressed into a couple of cylinders like boilers up to a pressure of 200 lb. per square inch, and this compressed air turned on to the diver as required. This marks a distinct advance on the old system of hand-turned air-pumps, directly connected with the diver on the bottom.

Some shellers are looking for much advancement in the application of modern machinery to improve shell-diving—particularly the motor-engine, which has done so much in the war; others look to a commercial possibility in cultivating shell, and are always asking for scientific research in this neglected field. The industry possesses many thorny problems of its own.

Many politicians of to-day advocate a white-worked shelling industry, and a few declare it should be made a white man's industry solely. Shellers contend this cannot be done (and the present four years' sitting Royal Commission has apparently not yet solved the problem), not that whites cannot do the work, but they will not

as conditions now exist. The white man with the abilities enabling success as a diver can, with more comfort and pleasure, make a better living ashore. Should any legislative enactment cause the abandonment of shelling in Torres Strait, an unpleasant phase would soon arise. The shell on the bottom would go on growing and increasing at the rate of compound interest.

During latter years about 75 per cent. of the shell picked up has been beyond the recognized three-mile limit. There is certainly a Queensland extra-territorial boundary, but this fact cannot control another flag.

The best and most extensive grounds cover the western approach to Torres Strait. A Dutch port and Dutch territory are close at hand, crying out for any sort of settlement to bring trade and development. The facility with which this ground is worked for shell from Thursday Island is not to be compared to the discomfort of working it from Dutch waters, but it can be done, and the application of the motor makes it easier. The motor is already being successfully manipulated by the coloured man in pearl-shelling. The shellers who left Torres Strait for the Aru Islands worked the Dutch waters there for about a year, keeping outside the three-mile limit with their sailing vessels, though watched by a Dutch patrol steamboat, and so forced the Dutch Indies Government to grant them terms to work their waters. These shellers have very successfully worked these Aru waters since 1906, the Dutch reserving exclusively for the natives depths of three fathoms and less. These Australians shell over there, domiciled only under the Dutch flag. It is only a few years ago that an Australian warship arrested two boats fishing a sea-reef off the Australian coast near Broome, and these vessels were not flying the British or Australian flag. They were prosecuted merely for a breach of Customs regulations in not paying duty on their stores.

Thus any hasty or ill-conceived handling of the pearl-

shelling industry might create a far worse position than at present exists (as seen in the case of the extremists in the White Australia policy), by losing the commercial benefits arising from the best part of the shelling industry in Torres Strait to a foreign flag, and the creating of a number of aliens, free from Australian control, but on one of Australia's doorsteps, necessitating a vigilant naval and Customs patrol, etc.

Note. Statistical figures quoted are taken from the Report of the Government Resident at Thursday Island for the year 1913.

CHAPTER VI

ACROSS AUSTRALIA (1901)

In 1901 I determined to travel from Port Darwin overland to Adelaide, in order to visit the few isolated settlers and telegraph officials in the Central Australian part of my diocese, which extended for nearly 1100 miles due south from Port Darwin. Few had at that time traversed the Continent, and that I was able to do so alone and in comparative comfort was owing entirely to the kindness and courtesy of Sir Charles Todd and the South Australian post and telegraph officials.

On May 28 I left Thursday Island a little before sundown in the *Taiyuan*. There were very few passengers, but a number of horses. There was a choppy sea next morning, and the ship rolled a great deal, so that there were no other passengers at meals. It was curious to watch the horses accommodating themselves to the roll of the vessel; it must have given them a good deal of exercise. The build of these vessels, with their fort-like upper deck, accessible only by winding stairs, suggested, without the racks of rifles in the saloon, that in the China Seas the deck passengers forward were not always so harmless as our present lot. For the next two days, after passing Cape Wessel, the weather was perfect and the ship steady. Melville Island, with its tens of thousands of buffaloes, showed low on the northern horizon, while the low mangrove capes and islands of the Northern Territory were skirted to the south; there were no lights and many shoals: a place to be avoided in dirty weather. As we neared Port Darwin the sun set

in a ruddy haze, and a bush fire glowed in his place; the pearling fleet crept homewards, and the great moon, almost full, made a flood of silver mist on our quarter, so that one could not see where mist ended and sky began. We anchored soon after eight, but the laws of Port Darwin are framed on those of the Medes and Persians, and if it be but five minutes after sunset the ship must wait until next morning to pass the doctor.

I soon met many old friends, and Mr. L. informed me that he had arranged to start on Tuesday morning. In the afternoon I arranged the weight and form of my luggage. Including everything it was about sixty-five pounds, nearly half being coats and blankets. I only hoped they might be enough for the cold nights on the table-land. Port Darwin is a beautiful town. It is situated on low red cliffs about eighty feet high overlooking the magnificent harbour, and has a tropical look from the luxuriant vegetation and well-kept gardens. The principal buildings are of stone, and the whole place has a far more permanent air than is usual in the north.

On June 4 I left Palmerston by train at 8 A.M. The weather was extraordinarily hot for the time of year. The line is narrow guage, 3 feet 6 inches, with steel sleepers. The chief features of interest are the huge ant-hills, ranging from 12 to 18 feet in height, and built of a reddish earth. In North Queensland I have measured one 24 feet high, and have seen one well over 30 feet. In addition to these are many smaller ant-hills built of a grey slaty-looking soil mixed with chopped grass. These hills are in shape somewhat like a very broad chisel, and are peculiar in that they are always exactly north and south. In fact, they are as good as a compass. Another remarkable feature of the country from Palmerston for about 120 miles south is the magnificent growth of an indigenous bamboo, which lines most of the creeks. At Brock's Creek I left the train, Mr. L. taking on my heavy luggage, and spent the night

at the house of the manager of the N.T.G.M. Company. The white population is very small, but we had a hearty little service in the office of another mining company, which had been kindly lent me.

I was to start next morning at 8 A.M., but we did not get off until 9 A.M., and at nine miles passed Yam Creek, where some fifty Chinese are employed. Soon after this we missed our road, and had to return along a steep creek for some four or five miles to get on to the track, or what passed for a track. My conductor, Mr. F., was a splendid driver. The road, at best but a horse-pad, disappeared altogether in parts. Mr. F. studied the country with a glance from the top of a range, and with an encouraging "We'll let her rip," we were off. I believe Mr. F. has won some reputation as a steeplechase rider, and he certainly deserves it, for we cleared obstacles in fine style. It is stimulating to the interest when one wheel mounts a rock while the other is climbing down the edge of a yawning washaway, but though we did balance for a few moments at the bottom of a creek while the hind wheels were deciding whether or not to take a header over the front, we came to no grief even when a bolt went on a steep descent. Mr. F., who had promised to get me in at noon, was on his mettle, and he had all put right in two minutes, and we were tearing down-hill to test it. It was nearly 2 P.M., however, when we reached Burrundi, and a prize turkey which had been awaiting me had given me up as a bad job, and was consoling a Parliamentary candidate. After a most hospitable welcome I had to start off again at 3 P.M., driven by Mr. S., for Pine Creek, twenty-six miles distant. We had a change of horses waiting on the road, and travelled in great style. From the top of the Union Mountain we had a magnificent view, reminding me of the country between the Hawkesbury River and Sydney. Everywhere were old claims and workings, now entirely in the hands of the Chinese. We met the

PINE CREEK RAILWAY STATION YARD

[illegible] BY PERMISSION OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR AUSTRALIA

one white man in the district, and he was leaving at the end of the month. We reached Pine Creek just after dark, and I was hospitably entertained by Mr. K., the post and telegraph master, nor was I sorry to get in after fifty-two miles of unspeakably bad roads. After something to eat I had nearly all the inhabitants to service, and then retired to a well-earned repose.

Pine Creek is the terminus of the railway, and boasts a school, which I visited next morning, and where I was requested to address the children. Mr. K. then drove me round to visit the mines and the Chinese town. There are about 250 Chinese miners here, and 400 at Wandi. There is a good cyaniding plant, which seems to be doing well. After driving round the neighbourhood we returned for lunch; and after visiting the various Church people made a final start with Mr. L. at 3 P.M. He had his camp about five miles out of town, and we stayed there for the night. After visiting the camp I went to see Mr. G., who has a station close at hand, and found that he had had no opportunity of attending service for twenty years. In the evening I baptized his three children, the eldest being thirteen. About a hundred yards from the house I noticed a tank of water, and learnt that the second boy (*aet.* eleven) had set up a claim of his own in the yard, at which he worked diligently as soon as he got back from school; he had made his own cradle and implements, and actually succeeded in getting a very appreciable quantity of gold. This young man ought to turn out a very practical miner. This was my first night in camp. It was very warm, and my mosquito-net was soaked through and through with the dew.

On June 7 we were up before daylight, but it was a long business to load nine pack-horses for the first time, and it was 9 A.M. before we got off. We were, besides Mr. L. and myself, two white men and three black boys, and with a buggy and twenty-six horses

we made a large cavalcade. Our progress was slow, as Mr. L. had to inspect each telegraph pole as we rode along. The country consisted of somewhat uninteresting granite ridges, but there were two beautiful flowering trees—one with a large yellow flower, called locally the cotton-tree, and the other with a beautiful red flower, something like *Pyrus Japonica* in the distance—and a large edible bean. After passing two creeks with the significant names of Sea Pie and Broken Wheel, we halted to change horses at Cullen's Creek (ten miles). A fine diamond, sold for £80, was found in this creek just above the crossing, but no others could be discovered. I had a look to see if I could find an endowment for the diocese, but only found one or two small but delicate flowers. About 2 P.M. we reached Ferguson's Creek (seventeen miles) and camped. In the evening I made some inquiries about the number of natives in the Northern Territory. It was very difficult to obtain any correct estimate, but the whole of the northern coast district appeared to be thickly populated by wild natives, who found plenty of food in the fish and wild fowl which abounded in the lagoons. In the interior, also, the numbers were very considerable, though the greater scarcity of food kept them down. The natives gathered the wild yams when in season, and kept them in immense mounds, sometimes ten feet high, covered with sand, as potatoes are preserved in England. I was informed that the natives see in the Magellan clouds surrounding the Southern Cross the form of an emu, and have a tradition that the three bright stars of the Cross are an emu's footprint, and the two pointers two blackfellows tracking it. I made my camp under a tree, where the dew was not so heavy, and next morning we drove on fifteen miles to the Edith River, over granite and slate ridges. Much of the country is auriferous. In Pine Creek I saw a curious sight. The Chinese were sweeping up the dust off the road and washing it for gold.

I had never before seen such an example of literally picking up gold in the streets. In the afternoon I rode up the creek about five miles to some fine falls. The creek was still and deep, with beautiful green islands and many shady trees. We saw a number of shells of a small turtle on which the natives had been having an aldermanic feast. We also came across two natives with a tame dingo. They had just extracted a bandicoot from a tree. The dingo seemed to be quite under control. The native made him drop the bandicoot, which he was carrying, by the simple expedient of pinching his hind leg. The sandstone cliffs of the table-land form here a fine semicircle of red and yellow rocks, about two hundred feet high, through a cleft in which the river falls into a magnificent basin nearly a mile in circumference and very deep. It is full of fish-eating crocodiles, which grow up to nine and ten feet in length.

Next morning we were up early and got off in good time; the first eighteen miles over rough basaltic country. On the top of the range is the grave of a telegraph operator who died there, and who expressed a wish to be buried "where all the winds blow." We met a fine and intelligent-looking native from Alice Springs, named Frank. He gave my companion an account of how he had once set out to shoot at the moon. Having got hold of a rifle, he climbed with great difficulty the highest mountain he could find, and there lay in wait for her to come near. Finally he made sure of his mark and shot, but the bullet made no impression, although he was sure he had shot straight!

The heat was intense, like that of a day in midsummer, and after a couple of hours' halt we went on ten miles to the Katherine River, a magnificent stream nearly as large as the Burdekin, with banks a hundred feet high. Here are a telegraph station, police quarters, and a public-house. At night the inhabitants gathered on the veranda of the postmaster's house, and we had a

hearty service, although the singing left something to be desired. There was a great gathering of natives for a corroboree, and all night long the distant wailing cries and booming of wooden trumpets could be heard.

Next day (June 10) a mail was leaving for Pine Creek, and I spent all the day until the mail went answering my correspondence, which had overtaken me here. In the evening I took the boat and sculled a little way along the river. The natives were resting on the river bank after their corroboree. The men, who wear only a loin-cloth, were finer made than the Queensland natives, and seemed to have a good time, as food and water were plentiful, the country being practically unstocked. Some ten miles above the station the Katherine emerges from very rough country through a great gorge of sandstone cliffs. Lava, sandstone, quartz, and limestone are said to be jumbled up together in inextricable confusion, making the country most difficult to enter. The formation is said to resemble the famous Banket of South Africa, and good gold has been found where prospectors have been able to penetrate.

Next morning I was up at daylight, and Mr. H. kindly took me before breakfast to see the curious rocks of crystalline limestone about two miles from the station. The rocks rise abruptly to the height of some fifteen or twenty feet from the sandy soil, and are weathered into the most extraordinary shapes; narrow lanes are formed between the rocks, giving the place its local name of Little Melbourne.

I spent the morning in visiting the small population of the Katherine, and found them glad to find that their Church had not altogether forgotten them. After lunch I bade farewell to my kind hosts at the station, and went out to camp at the Six-Mile Creek. Here I noticed a fine bower-bird playing round with bright pebbles, glass, and broken telegraph insulators. With regard to

these latter it may be mentioned that among the enemies of the line in the northern section are the frogs, who creep up the poles and destroy the insulation with their wet bodies. The hornets' nests are also a source of trouble. Lizards and flying foxes are also occasionally electrocuted by the copper wire. A curious kind of fig-tree grows here. The leaves look exactly like sand-paper, and are used by the blacks as such. A short while ago a traveller was found here by one of my companions, dead in his mosquito-net, apparently from snake-bite.

The night was cooler and the next morning quite fresh. Seventeen miles brought us to Bacon Swamp, where we camped near a tree marked "KING 18.2.71." In spite of its name it is rather a pretty little water-hole. The name arose from the men employed to build the telegraph line striking here on account of insufficient food, when the contractor, to pacify them, gave them a stock of bacon which he had in his tent. A few drops of rain fell in the night. Left camp about 8.30 A.M. Heavy sand; passed King's Creek (four miles) and Roper River (four miles). This is the head of the great river that empties itself into the Gulf of Carpentaria. I saw several curious trees, the names of which I could not obtain. Twelve miles farther on we reached Providence Knoll, where we camped. There are very curious deep circular water-holes on the rising ground. A pretty spot, surrounded by fine trees. The name arose through the higher ground being a refuge for the survey party when threatened by a flood. A creeper with beautiful red and black seeds grows in the scrub here. There are two great drawbacks to travelling in this country—the grass seeds and the flies. The latter were most troublesome even at that time of year, covering everything from sunrise to sunset.

Next day (June 14) we drove over very low country, liable to heavy floods, the head-waters of the Roper.

The floods are said to cover many miles of country in a wet season; the soil is poor and sandy. We camped at some water-holes on Stirling Creek. I noticed a tree with a curious seed provided with two large vanes which make it whirl round like a windmill as it falls from the tree, doubtless aiding to carry it to a distance. The vanes are the shape of a ship's propeller.

We were up early next morning; breakfast finished before daylight. Our journey was over black-soil flats with many creeks. We passed Abraham's Billabong, a beautiful water-hole covered with lilies and surrounded by fine trees; then on four miles farther to the Bitter Springs, where we camped. This is a mineral warm spring on a patch of limestone, highly charged with sulphur, and bubbling up with considerable volume from a clump of pandanus trees, and beautifully clear. The river is a wide, deep stream of still, permanent water, fringed with huge paper-bark and other trees, and full of fish. The most noticeable are the striped tiger-fish and the ten-gun brig, a small white fish with five large black spots like ports down each side. The soil here seems to be very rich, especially along the banks of the creeks.

Next morning (June 16) we went on fourteen miles to Elsey River cattle station, well known afterwards as the home of Mrs. Gunn, authoress of "We of the Never Never." At night we had a most hearty service on the veranda. It was most cheering to see the great attention and the efforts made by the men to join in the reponses and the singing.

I saw here a novel sight: a Chinese drover, who, with his assistants, was bringing down 150 cattle for a Chinese butcher. The Chinese are always ready to pay cash either for cattle or payable mines, and they were pushing their way steadily. We did not start until the afternoon, and then made our way to what is called on the map All Saints' Well. The well is there no longer,

having been made in the bed of the creek, in which there was now water. A tree called gutta-percha grows here. It bleeds a milky, sticky sap when cut, very like india-rubber, and burns with a faintly similar smell. All round this country one was struck by the beautiful great patches of red "everlastings" on the ridges and high ground, covering acres in places with a red carpet.

We were up early and got a good start before 8 A.M. About four miles on the road we left the low Elsey country, and with it all traces of tropical vegetation, entering on dry limestone country covered with a thin layer of ironstone. After about twenty-two miles' travelling we reached No. 2 Well. During the late drought there was no water between here and Newcastle Waters, and all the stock had to be moved here. The well is a fine and well-built one, with a substantial fence and covering, and is about eighty feet deep. The limestone formation is curious, and is mixed with flint. Next day we went on to No. 3 Well, which had been lately completed, and is 107 feet deep. The old well was broken into by the creek in the wet season, and tons of earth were carried down, leaving an excavation thirty feet wide by sixty in length and twenty-five feet deep. Although all this had disappeared down the well, the latter seemed as deep as ever, but dry. During the time that the water was running into the well the sound could be heard three miles away, but the water all disappeared, like the earth, into some interior chasm. The formation of the stone in the new well was very beautiful, consisting of cavities in a kind of sandstone, filled with most beautiful limestone crystals. The water in the water-hole near the well was just like milk. It is said that water of this colour evaporates very slowly. Certainly it was very cold, while ordinary water was quite warm. The night was quite cold.

Next day we drove on through the same kind of country between a low sandy ridge and the dry coolibah

swamp, which is dignified by the name of Birdum Creek. There are no creeks and no hills in this part of the world. We camped at the Ironstone Hole. One of the boys brought me a piece of skull carefully held between two sticks. Two black boys died here of thirst, and the natives shun the spot. The south-east wind was very piercing all the morning.

Next day (June 21) we did not make such an early start as usual, as we had a short stage. After about ten miles of what is called Bay of Biscay country we turned off the road to find water. The going was terribly bad, the ground being full of holes and very uneven. Had the buggy not been very strong it would have been broken to pieces; as it was we smashed a swingle-bar and broke a strong iron rail.

Finally, however, after two or three miles of jolting we reached Blue Grass Swamp and camped there, as the stage into the station was too long. A very beautiful tree with a scarlet flower, something like a poinciana, was in full bloom along the road. It goes by the name of the coral-tree. The leaf is curiously shaped, something like a laterally extended ivy. The flies destroyed all comfort in travelling. It was one continual battle from sunrise to sunset. I was told, however, that they were not usually so bad.

Next day (Saturday) we passed over some flat uninteresting country for about twenty-one miles to Daly Waters telegraph station, which we reached in time for lunch. The station was deserted during the late drought, as there was no water within fifty miles, and all the stock were removed to No. 2 Well. Distance from Port Darwin, 413 miles.

On Sunday morning we had service at the station, and the singing was led by a harmonium and a violin; in fact I think the violin did most of the singing, but we made up at night by singing until we were hoarse.

The natives here plaster their bodies in winter with a mixture of earth and ashes, which makes them look as if they were dressed in grey tight-fitting clothes. We had just enough rain to mark the dust, and the weather turned warmer. I obtained here some interesting native stone implements, including a spear-head beautifully cut out of glass.

We left Daly Waters with many thanks to our most kind hosts on Tuesday (June 25), and went about seventeen miles through patches of mulga and hedgewood scrub to Auld's Pond, where we camped, going on the following day to Milner's Lagoon, a fine sheet of water in a plain covered with blue-bush, which seemed to be greatly approved of by our horses. The flies were worse here than at any other point, and that is saying a great deal. The lagoon was covered with white spoonbills, ibis, and a few ducks, which latter soon took themselves off. Twenty miles of thick mulga and hedgewood scrub, traversed by a narrow winding road, brought us next day (June 27) to Frew's Ironstone Lagoon, a beautiful water-hole surrounded on three sides by low ironstone cliffs, and situated between the scrub and the open plain. Four whistling ducks were disporting themselves on its bosom, and three were shortly stewing for supper. The red cliffs, large spreading coolibah trees, and winding water make this a beautiful spot. Mr. L. had a narrow escape here many years ago. The natives enticed two of his party away under pretence of showing them a new water-hole, and Mr. L. was reading under a tree when he happened to look round and saw a dozen wild blacks, with spears ready, creeping up close upon him. Fortunately his revolver was lying beside him, and at the sight of it they fled. The suspicious conduct of their guides alarmed the other men, and they fortunately returned without further search for the imaginary water-hole. Several large eagle-hawks were seen on the road, and bird life of all

kinds was very plentiful. I had not seen any wallaby or kangaroos in the Northern Territory.

We made a late start from Frew's on the afternoon of the following day (June 28), and after five or six miles came out on to Sturt's Plain, which is some sixteen miles across. The road was very bad, and it was not until nearly sunset that we reached Five-Mile Point, a cape of scrub reaching out into the plain to within about a mile and a half of the road. Having brought water with us, we made a dry and, as it proved, a very cold camp in the dark. When I woke in the morning I found the remains of the skeleton of a white man attired in a blue shirt lying literally alongside of me. There was nothing to show the cause of death. Probably he had been following the telegraph line and turned in here to perish from thirst. It was too cold to make any but an early start in the morning, and we were soon on our way over the remainder of the plain, and through some open wooded country to North Newcastle Water, a magnificent sheet of water a quarter of a mile wide and two miles in length. It is the overflow of this lagoon which forms Lake Woods, thirty miles farther south. Large numbers of pelicans were fishing and sailing about, and the grass on the banks was a most vivid green. We found a much warmer camp here than on the plain, and next morning (Sunday) we went twelve miles farther on to the Newcastle Waters cattle station, where we spent the rest of the day. Unfortunately all hands were away mustering. The station is situated on a stony ridge on the west side of the Newcastle Water, and has a somewhat bare and desolate look. The rock in this part is sandstone, ironstone, and jasper, of which there were many beautiful pebbles. The flies seemed to get worse as we got south. From about midday to sunset they rendered life a burden. Here, as elsewhere, the losses from the drought had been very heavy.

After a quiet day here we went on next day to Pole Camp, where the line party was camped. The country was flat and uninteresting, with a very low stony range running parallel to the creek. We had tea with the line party, making in all eleven persons: "the largest camp in the Northern Territory," some one remarked. After tea we had service. It was a striking scene in the large tent, illuminated by some rather doubtful lamps. It was certainly the first time that divine service had been held anywhere in these parts, and some of the party had been years upon the line without even a visit to Palmerston. The night was bitterly cold, and a cutting south-east wind blew all next day, chilling the very bones. We proceeded down the dreary flats of the Newcastle to a small creek called the Lawson, where we camped. I walked to a small range two miles off, and had a fine view of Lake Woods, a vast sheet of shallow water some eighty or ninety miles in circumference, now full, but in dry seasons converted into a parched plain. Later on I walked down to the shore itself, and by climbing a tree near the shore obtained a view over the reedy foreshore, which swarmed with ducks and other waterfowl. Opposite I could just see the farther shore, but a little south no shore was visible, and the lake must be some twenty miles across. The great expanse of water seemed as if it could never fail, but Mr. L. assured me that he had seen the whole bed of the lake covered with a vast bush fire. It is a real lake, with well-defined shores; but Sturt crossed it twice without knowing that it was a lake at all. When the overland line was being surveyed, the party was in great straits for water, when one of the men drew attention to a lake on the horizon. He was laughed at, and told that it was a mirage. No water was found next day, and then the man said that mirage or no mirage he was going to see for himself; he did so, and thus discovered the lake.

Next day we proceeded to the Ferguson over the Newcastle flats, and camped close to a low range. I walked through about three miles of rough country to Lamb's Spring, a fine pool of permanent water. Rain threatened, but fortunately did not fall.

Next day I rode over some very rough, though low, ranges to Powell's Creek telegraph station. From the top of the range there is a very fine view, extending to Lake Woods on the north, and to the ranges beyond Powell's Creek on the south. The station stands on the edge of a small plain, has a permanent water-supply, and is substantially built of stone. I received the warmest welcome, and it was luxury indeed to sleep in a bed with sheets, listen to the rain on the roof, and be thankful that it had not come a day earlier. The country is curious; broken here with masses of conglomerate, sandstone, and ironstone, and there are multitudes of agates and jasper and other beautifully glazed pebbles. There are said to be also more valuable stones among the ranges. I walked a mile or two into the bush to see two aboriginal tree graves, well and firmly made of strong timber.

CHAPTER VII

ACROSS AUSTRALIA—*continued* (1901)

We left Powell's Creek on Monday (July 8) with many regrets. My new horse was a little fresh, and a black boy was put on him to exercise him a little. Another boy, as I came up, remarked, with a pleased grin of anticipation, "That fellow horse belong o' you. My word!" However, he was doomed to disappointment, for we proceeded very amicably over some rough, red ridges, covered with spinifex, to Renner's Spring, which is a little oasis in a plain surrounded by ranges. Here I found two well-made native huts shaped like a Kafir kraal, well thatched and waterproof. I had never seen such elaborate aboriginal dwellings. Close by I found a number of stone knives and other implements which they had either forgotten or thrown away.

Three days of rather dreary country brought us to Attack Creek. Crossing Morfit Creek—a very wide watercourse—we found some beautiful specimens of jasper and other stones. The creek seemed to be full of them. Attack Creek was the farthest point reached by Stuart in his first journey. He was attacked here by natives, and returned to Adelaide. On the telegraph line we passed the grave of a man who had died from thirst within a few miles of water. He had gone off the line to within a hundred yards of water and returned without finding it. At Attack Creek I was met by Mr. S. of Tennant Creek station, and parted with very great regret from Mr. L. and his party, who returned from here to Port Darwin. Nothing could have

exceeded the kindness and courtesy I received from the whole party. We left next morning after seeing off Mr. L. on his homeward journey, and travelled for twenty miles over desolate sandstone and spinifex country to Philip's Creek, where there is a fine water-hole. A considerable hole, where we camped for dinner, had dried up completely since Mr. S. passed the previous day, so little can one count on water here. The flies were again very troublesome, and the spear-grass seeds worse than anywhere on the journey. There were some pretty flowers here: a small heliotrope ground-creeper looking much like the garden verbena, a small blue flower like a harebell, and a white flower much like an English daisy.

Mr. S. told me a curious story. He had been camped by himself in a lonely gorge, and was sitting by a fire that he had made in the sand, when he heard the report of a shot, and a bullet scattered up the sand at his feet. In considerable amazement he examined his own weapon, which was not discharged, and waited, but heard nothing more, and could not unravel the mystery for some days, when he remembered that he had passed the spot some days before and lost a loose cartridge, which must have been buried in the sand until exploded by the fire.

We had a warm night; and next day travelled over more sand and spinifex to Tennant Creek, which is a stone station built on a little creek. The trees in all this country are very low and stunted, and one got fine distant views of the red sandstone ranges, which run from east to west, and are beautifully coloured; the air was extraordinarily clear and dry, and one could see immense distances. I was warmly welcomed at the station, where there were five men, and stayed over Sunday and Monday.

The natives here were a fine handsome race, with, in some instances, markedly Jewish features. One was

struck with their vigorous life and playfulness, contrasting greatly with the abject appearance of the blacks near Queensland towns or stations. The men wear only a narrow loin-cloth, and dance and jump about with much gracefulness, playing and jesting with one another. They seemed to be treated with great kindness here.

On Sunday afternoon, after my arrival, I walked to McDouall Ranges, some three or four miles to the south, and climbed up a conical hill of red sandstone, some two hundred and fifty feet high, from the top of which I had a magnificent view over the alluvial plain and the red sandstone and ironstone ranges which bound it.

I left Tennant Creek on Wednesday (July 17) about 11 A.M. A few miles from the station we passed through the McDouall Ranges—broken masses of red sandstone and slate, with "blows" of black ironstone. Mount Samuel, a few miles farther on, is one solid mass of iron. The road was heavy with sand, and though we put in four horses it was dark when we reached Kelly's Well, thirty-two miles from Tennant Creek. A bitterly cold south-east wind was blowing, and it seemed to go clean through the blankets, making sleep a difficult matter; in fact we were only too glad to get up at the very first streak of dawn. We had a very heavy day—thirty-four miles of deep sand. The country is most desolate, spinifex and sand, except for a few hundred yards on each side of the very rare creeks. We stopped for dinner at the Gilbert, where there was a little grass. To the east the bare Murchison Range stretches for about twenty-five miles like a Yorkshire moor, but with spinifex for grass, and often not even that. Towards evening the wind dropped, and we had a more pleasant camp at the Bonny Bell. I had again to say my Evensong by the light of the camp fire. The stars were wonderfully brilliant, as always in this clear air. The Bonny is a large sandy creek, and I noticed some fine jaspers and

other pebbles as we crossed it. I also found part of a fine spear-head of opaline quartz.

Next morning the first part of our way led through the Davenport Ranges, and it was delightful to get on stony ground after the heavy sand. After crossing the Dixon, where Sturt's red bean-tree grows plentifully, we entered an amphitheatre of sandstone and quartzite hills, in the centre of which a space over a mile square was filled with gigantic granite boulders, many of them almost perfectly round and from ten to five-and-twenty feet in diameter. It was a weird scene of desolation, and one was scarcely surprised to hear that they were called the "Devil's Marbles." Shortly after we reached the top of the pass, and caught sight of the distant Osborne Range. The interval was filled with fifty miles of pure unmitigated desert and sandy plain, covered with low shrubs. We camped at Wycliffe Well, on a small creek. At night we heard a curious hoot, like an owl. The natives say that it is caused by a large spider, called the barking spider, but it seems impossible for a spider to make such a noise. Early start next day and thirty-five miles of heavy sand—a terrible day for the horses. Half-way we met Professor Spencer and Mr. Gillan, who were engaged in investigating the habits and customs of the natives. The desert was full of wild yams, to obtain which the natives dig holes from two to three feet in depth. Just before sunset we reached the Osborne Range and the Taylor Well. As we neared the creek we noticed many natives' fires. They seemed to be numerous here.

Next day, Sunday (July 21), we again started early, as I was anxious to reach Barrow Creek in good time for service. From the top of the Watts Range we had a fine view back over the desert, and finding the country improve, reached Barrow Creek telegraph station about 4 P.M. At night we had one of the best and heartiest services on the journey. The station lies in a narrow

pass between two high flat-topped hills of quartzite, containing an immense quantity of mica and beautiful crystals of rose-coloured quartz. Behind the station is a rugged gorge down which the blacks crept in the early days to attack the station, killing the stationmaster and a linesman, who are buried close to the house. The dying man managed to telegraph the news of the attack, and the survivors escaped, though badly wounded. From the hills adjoining the station the view is one of great magnificence, over plains which stretch for fifty miles on both sides, Central Mount Stuart bounding the view to the south, and Mounts Stezlecke and Morphett to the north. The whole neighbourhood is one of great interest and beauty; the hills look like gigantic earthworks, crowned by a forty-foot wall of red sandstone or conglomerate; and the colours are exceedingly beautiful. On Monday I walked into a lonely valley in the ranges and found myself in a vast amphitheatre of crags; the silence was broken only by two birds chasing away a hawk with angry cries; the spinifex up the mountain sides looked emerald green in the setting sun; and the ground was bright with flowers. It is difficult to convey any adequate idea of the grandeur of the spot, or of the countless things to interest the botanist or geologist.

On Thursday (July 25) I left Barrow Creek with Mr. B., the superintendent of the central section of the telegraph line. We had a fine team of four splendid horses, which covered the twenty-two miles to Sterling station in quick time. Next day we travelled over vast plains to the Ti Tree Well, about thirty miles. For dinner we camped near the foot of Central Mount Stuart, 2500 feet above the sea. Mount Browne, some miles to the west, is also a fine rugged mountain. The wind was intensely cold and piercing, and, though it generally fell at night, there was a heavy dew, and in the morning everything was covered with hoar-frost. We got a late start from

the Ti Tree Well, as the horses had wandered. This day we drove about thirty-two miles, and camped at Prowse's Gap—a pass between two ridges of gneissic granite and diorite. I climbed up the western ridge and had a most wonderful view. To the north was an uninterrupted plain, bounded by Central Mount Stuart, forty-five miles away; to the west low rugged ranges, behind which were glimpses of the blue mountains of the Reynolds Range. To the south-east were the fine peaks of Mounts Boothby, Glaisher, and Wells; and to the east a vast wooded plain stretching to the horizon, with the isolated mountain of Arno's Peak nearly fifty miles away. The strata on the ridge here dip almost perpendicularly, forming steep slopes of flat rock. In one of these is a hole about five feet deep and about the same width, filled with beautiful water; the water follows the dip of the stratum, and the hole has apparently been formed by water washing round pebbles in a crack. These little holes are frequent throughout the country, but often little known.

The clearness of the air in these parts was most astonishing. Rocks a quarter of a mile away looked almost as if one could lay the hand on them. There was not a particle of haze, and the distant mountains stood up with startling clearness.

Next day we camped at the Native Gap, in Hann's Range, where I noticed fir-trees for the first time. We were thus enabled to have a quiet afternoon, which I enjoyed after the rush of the last two days. My Evensong was accompanied by the wild music of the wind in the pine-trees; now swelling into a roar, now dying away into an almost inaudible undertone of sighing. I think that many of the Psalms, with their nature voices, must have been written in the open air in a land not unlike this in its natural features; at any rate they never come so home to one as out in the bush.

Next day we travelled through dense mulga scrub

thirty-five miles to Burt Creek, which runs through a little plain 2300 feet above the sea.

A very bleak camp, and an icy wind next morning as we proceeded on through twenty-five miles of mulga scrub to the head of the Macdonnell Range; this scrub, called Everard's scrub, extends, with the exception of a mile or two of plain on the Burt, for sixty miles from Hann's Range to the Macdonnell Range, and is a dreary, comfortless region. From the head of the range to Alice Springs is ten miles of as rough a road as I have ever travelled, through low jumbled rocks and ranges, dreary, but not beautiful. The station itself is entirely surrounded by rocks, and must be very hot in summer. At the time of our arrival it was most bitterly cold; and I was devoutly thankful to sleep again in a bed after six days of as cold travelling as I ever experienced. Here, too, I found letters, newspapers, and other tokens of civilization, although still 322 miles from the railway. The ranges and gaps through which the rivers traverse the ranges in this neighbourhood are very fine. I was much interested in the natives, who had here in Mr. B. a courageous and sympathetic sub-protector. The men had very fine features of distinctly Jewish type, with full beards. Some of them can read and write fairly well. One very serious matter was the number of half-caste children who, according to the sub-inspector's report for 1900, largely outnumbered the black children. The nights and days were both bitterly cold here. On the previous night the dry-bulb thermometer went down to between 26° and 27°, and the wet bulb to 25°.

Next day I walked up a hill near the station and had a magnificent view. The Macdonnell Range, running east and west, has steep walls of rock on the north and south sides, and between them a kind of trough about ten miles wide filled with a jumble of low rocky hills. Imagine a great heavy broken sea of yellow water, with waves breaking up irregularly with an interval of two hundred

feet from the lowest to the highest points, and the foam and broken water all rocks and boulders, and you will have some idea of the scene. All the rocks and stones are yellow and yellowish red, the grass yellow, and the ground yellow or yellowish red. Every tint and shade of these colours cover the whole scene, except where it is dotted over with sage-green bushes and low stunted trees. The whole blends into a feast of harmonious tints and a scene of utter barren desolation. It reminded me most strongly of the pictures and photographs I had seen of the deserts and mountains of Palestine. Shape, colour, and vegetation seemed to be almost identical, and one was not surprised to see a camel team threading its way through one of the narrow defiles or gaps by which the rivers find their way out to the south. I have never seen anything quite like these gaps. Heavitree Gap, through which the southern road passes, is a break in the range about one hundred yards wide entirely filled by the sandy bed of the River Todd, along which the road passes. The cliffs on either side are a slaty reddish yellow sandstone, with the strata very distinct, and tilted at an angle of 45°. They rise abruptly to a height of two hundred feet. Just to the south of the gap is a lately discovered hot spring on the top of a low mound. No water is visible, but a gentle steam rises, covering the stones with moss and condensing on the under-side of the stones in drops of dew. The rock is limestone mixed with igneous ironstone, and surrounded by granite.

On Saturday I drove, with Mr. F. of Undoolia station, to Emily Gap, ten miles from Alice Springs. Passing through Heavitree Gap we went along the south side of the ranges eastward through beautiful park-like country; the southern slopes of the range are covered with luxuriant growth, and are a great contrast to the barren northern side. Emily Gap is about the same depth as Heavitree, but much narrower,

and the cliffs even more perpendicular. It is about two hundred yards long, and is filled with a pool of very deep water. On one side of the cliffs are some aboriginal paintings in red ochre, but we were unable to see them from the side of the gap on which we were. The average annual rainfall of Alice Springs is under five inches, and it is wonderful how much vegetation there is and how it survives the droughts. The blacks here make a damper out of flour produced by grinding together a tiny black grass seed with the seed of a grass not unlike the Flinders grass, and looking exactly like canary seed. The collection of the seed must be an infinitely slow process. The rocks are full of euro, a species of kangaroo.

On Sunday (August 4) we had Morning Prayer at the Alice Springs telegraph office. The service was well attended; and it was a great joy, after all the weeks in the bush, to hear the canticles sung, and sung well.

Next day, Monday (August 5), I left Alice Springs and my kind hosts with great regret. Every one was more than kind, and the country is, I think, the most interesting and, in some ways, the most beautiful I have seen in Australia. I left about 2 P.M., the only passenger by the mail coach to Oodnadatta. About four miles from the station we passed through Heavitree Gap, which I have already mentioned. On the first survey flood marks were found which showed that the whole country to the north of the range must have been converted into a huge lake fifteen feet deep, and the blacks tell that before the white men came they had once to take refuge from the flood on the hills. As the annual rainfall is under seven inches, such a catastrophe must be very rare. It is easy to explain, as there is no escape for the water from the trough between the ranges except through Heavitree and one or two much smaller gaps. At Heavitree the gap is formed by the meeting of two beds of strata dipping east and west respectively, but I was told that one of the gaps has apparently been

torn by an earthquake or by shrinkage, as the projecting rocks on one side fit corresponding holes on the other. The rock on the south side of the range is limestone, which has once overlain the sandstone and has now been tilted with it almost on end. Shortly after leaving the gap we came on to a beautiful plain, perfectly level and some fifteen miles wide, covered with splendid grass, which I was informed would last two years. The plain extends east and west for a distance of about four hundred miles. Having crossed the plain we got on some rising ground, and had one of the most beautiful views I have ever seen, of Mount Undoolia and the eastern part of the Macdonnell Ranges, lighted by the setting sun. The most brilliant efforts of Turner's brush were as nothing beside it. The ranges here always reminded me in shape of the photographs of the lunar mountains. The effect was heightened by the intensely black shadows, such as I have never seen elsewhere, and which are, I suppose, due to the absence of refraction, owing to the intense dryness and clearness of the air. In front of us was the Waterhouse Range, the lower slopes of which we were ascending. Some of the hills were an exquisite crimson softened by the covering of green porcupine grass, while the ranges to the east were all shades of white and blue. Towards the top of the range we came out on an open valley filled with curious castles, walls, and blocks of a kind of granite, from fifteen to twenty feet high, and rising directly out of the grass as though they had been built there. We did not reach our camping-place near the Ooraminna Rock Hole, on the top of the range, till after dark, and I was glad to find that we had the shelter of some mulga scrub.

Next day about thirty-seven miles through terribly heavy sand, with a few miles of better travelling at the end. We passed a train of twenty-five camels with loading for Alice Springs. They are curious, snaky-looking beasts as they sidle along in single file. When

we camped for dinner the driver told the black boy, who was awkward in harnessing the horses, that he was as bad as a Chinaman. He replied indignantly, "No fear! Me no all same Chinaman; Chinaman no talk him English!"

We passed a well sunk two hundred feet on the highest part of the range, and left. It is said that no one ever expected to find water there. We camped at an old dam, a bare dusty plain all round it. The night was cold, and there was no shelter, but fortunately no wind. In the morning I noticed clouds of the little green parrot so common throughout Central Australia. It is a most unæsthetic bird, all one vivid arsenical green. When a flock settles on a tree it looks as if it had been painted by a child out of a shilling paint-box. Nevertheless it is most beautiful as it wheels in the sun or fringes the water with a brilliant margin of colour. Just to the south of the Waterhouse Range is a belt of kurrajong trees. They are found nowhere else, either north or south. The wood is curiously light and porous. During the night the black boy rushed up to the fire crying out that the Kadaitcha was out after him with a spear and a fire-stick. The Kadaitcha is an evil spirit or ghost. When a native is about some nefarious purpose he puts on Kadaitcha shoes, made of emu's feathers and leaving no track.

We left the Braedon Dam after nine, the horses taking some time to get in, and had a journey of thirty-six miles to the Alice Well. The first fourteen miles were fairly good going over a high table-land, with views of low hills; the latter all over sandhills. Over these latter one progresses about three miles an hour. Driving is a sinecure, as the driver simply straps the reins to the seat and reads the paper, or indulges in such sleep as a driver may without being too far gone to objurgate the horses from time to time. Ours were always being promised a tremendous thrashing a few

yards farther on, but it never came, for they were excellent horses. The driver at last convulsed me by exclaiming pathetically as we toiled slowly through a slough of sand, "Get on, you nasty things. What would King Edward say if he could see his coach going at such a rate!" These sandhills are endless. One toils up one only to see an exactly similar one just ahead. Only very staunch horses could possibly pull the coach up, especially at the end of some forty miles travelling. The top of one hill was covered with some white glittering dust which looked exactly like snow.

Next day we toiled for twenty miles through the famous Depot Sandhills. The mail is allowed two days for the twenty-six miles between Alice Well and Horseshoe Bend, and no wonder. I should think four miles a day, two in the morning and two in the afternoon, about a fair thing. We had immensely powerful horses, and they did about two miles an hour with great exertion. Some of the hills are high and steep even for firm ground, and all covered with sand from three to six feet deep. We camped in the bed of the Finke River. A cold night and no shelter. In the morning, ice two inches thick on the dishes. Before starting I made a sketch of a curious mountain, forming the angle of the river. Yellow, red, and white sandstone in most regular bands; a very striking object. We only went on a few miles to the Horseshoe Bend, where there is a store, and where we were to meet the other coach. The hills along the Finke are most extraordinary. They present cliffs of red, yellow, white, and occasionally pink sandstone in horizontal layers, sometimes diversified by a kind of dark shale. The red is usually at the bottom, then the yellow, and the white on top, often covered by a top layer of red, but there are many layers of each colour of different shades. In places the sandstone seems to have been subjected to great heat, and has been changed into a substance resembling light earthenware, or porous

slag, and is mixed with rounded quartz pebbles. Altogether the country is most interesting geologically, while the vivid hues of the cliffs and the varying reds and crimsons of the sandhills give a feast of colour to the eye. The Finke is a broad sandy stream, with good water-holes, and running beneath the sand. The storekeeper kindly gave me his room, for which I was grateful, as sleeping out was not an unmixed joy in such frosty weather.

We left the Horseshoe Bend early next morning, keeping down the Finke to Crown Point, a curious isolated hill at the end of a range crowned with square blocks of red sandstone. We had a long drive of sixty-two miles to a station on the Finke, where I was heartily welcomed, though in somewhat primitive bush fashion. As I was leaving, each of the four men on the station brought me a pound and asked me to devote it to Church work. Next day we had a long drive over stony, bare downs to Charlotte Waters telegraph station. The station is built like a fort, and must be hot and uncomfortable in these peaceful times. The country round is very bare and flat.

Next day we reached Oodnadatta long after dark. The town consists of an hotel, two stores, and two or three houses. Next day I repaired to the railway station, and seeing a stationmaster in a gold-band cap and porters in uniform bustling about, I felt that I had indeed returned to civilization, and hurrying up to the stationmaster I asked when the next train left for Adelaide. "A week to-day," was the answer. "And when did the last train go?" I asked. "A week ago." This Arcadian spot had a train, and has still, once a fortnight only. By a most fortunate chance, however, the Commissioner for Railways arrived in a special train shortly after, and most kindly asked me to accompany him down, so that I travelled in great comfort and with most pleasant company, which made

the way seem short. Two hundred miles south of Oodnadatta we came upon the most dry and desolate country I ever saw. For two hundred miles, as far as Quorn, there had been hardly any rain for years, and everything seemed to be completely dried out of the ground. It was a most pitiable sight. Rain fell, however, a few days afterwards. I reached Adelaide on Saturday (August 17), eleven weeks after leaving Port Darwin, and received the most generous welcome from the Bishop and Church-people of that city, from which I returned to Thursday Island, viâ Melbourne, Sydney, and Brisbane.

CHAPTER VIII

THE NORTHERN TERRITORY (1900–1915)

THE Northern Territory comprises an oblong strip of country, four hundred miles wide and about eleven hundred miles long, running from the northern coast at Darwin through the centre of Australia to the South Australian border. It was originally the Northern Territory of South Australia, by which it was administered at an annual loss of £80,000, until some seven years ago, when South Australia succeeded in selling its white elephant to the Commonwealth Parliament, whose members were anxious to have some land of their own to play with, for the modest sum of £4,000,000. Since then the Commonwealth has administered the Territory at an annual loss of some three or four times that of South Australia.

The country is, on the whole, very poor, and is not to be compared with the part of Queensland in the same latitude. The coastal lands are swampy and of little use for cattle, though large numbers of wild buffalo thrive on them. It has been proposed to breed cattle with the buffalo in order to produce cattle which would thrive on the swamps, but I have not heard of any practical results. Several attempts have been made to introduce cattle on a large scale in the north-east of the Territory, but they have all been disastrous failures.

On the other hand, there are very considerable areas along the rivers running into the sea to the north which are well suited for cattle, especially on the Victoria River, where the industry has been very successful. Most of the northern stations have now been bought

by an American firm, and works are to be established at Darwin. Southward of the coastal lands, which are from one hundred to two hundred miles wide, comes a mineral belt of country, some hundred to a hundred and fifty miles from north to south. A good deal of mining has been done in the Northern Territory, but very little success has attended the ventures. Most of the gold has been got by the patient Chinese, who are content with small returns, and the tin, though rich finds have been made, is rarely profitable with white labour.

South of the mining districts are a very few cattle stations in favoured spots, but most of the country consists either of sandy plains, growing only spinifex, or huge areas of rocky and arid table-land. Immediately south of the Macdonnell Ranges, some thousand miles south of Darwin, is a belt of country runnning east and west for a long distance, but not more than twenty miles wide, which, though very dry, produces excellent grass, and is most suitable for horse-breeding. South of this the sandy desert stretches away far into South Australia.

For many years before the Commonwealth took over the Northern Territory the white population was only about a thousand, while the Chinese population, which up to that time did most of the hard work, was more than double that amount. During the last seven years the Commonwealth has succeeded, by lavish expenditure and by the introduction of a small army of officials, in increasing the white population to over three thousand, while the Chinese have very greatly diminished, chiefly by transference to other States. Even a population of three thousand does not seem very adequate to an area of 400,000 square miles.

The problem of the empty north—for the north of Western Australia is nearly as empty as the Territory, and Queensland, north of Cairns, is but very sparsely inhabited—is one of the most serious of all problems for Australia.

The fact that nearly all the shipping from England was first carried on the south side of Australia has given rise to the idea that the south coast of Australia is the nearest to, and most in touch with, the rest of the world, whereas, of course, the direct opposite is the case. It is the north coast of Australia that is far nearer, both to the Old Country and to the East.

Its relation to the latter may be gathered from the following figures, furnished by the Secretary of the Royal Geographical Society of Australia. The distances are given in sea miles.

Darwin to	Hong-Kong	2320
,,	Formosa	2200
,,	Philippine Islands	1156
,,	Melbourne	3030
Thursday Island to	Dutch New Guinea	112
,, ,,	late German Guinea	160
,, ,,	Melbourne	2230

The question cannot but soon arise whether, in view of the growing population of the crowded East and the desire of countries like China and Japan to find an outlet for their surplus population, Australia has a right to keep empty and unused vast areas of the surface of the earth which would undoubtedly support in comfort millions of a coloured population, even if they cannot support a white population, less industrious, less inured to the tropics, and with a much higher standard of comfort.

I propose to speak in a later chapter of the White Australia ideal, its truth and its perversion, but granting it for the moment as the policy which represents the convictions of nine-tenths of the people in Australia, the question arises whether it is a possible policy. The answer would seem to be that it is not permanently possible so long as the north of Australia remains practically empty. It is the part of Australia that is nearest to the East and to Europe also. Large portions

of it could be easily cultivated with coloured labour, while other large portions are suitable for mining with cheaper labour than can be now found. In a word, it is a huge unoccupied and occupiable portion of the earth's surface, and has Australia any moral right or any actual power to play the dog in the manger, and neither use it herself nor allow any one else to do so? It is difficult to assert any moral right, and it is perfectly obvious that Australia has only the power to keep it owing to British protection. Will Britain always exercise a protection based on such a doubtful right in the future? Australia can only have plausible grounds for claiming the protection of the Empire so long as it is at least doing its very best to make use of its vast usable territory. There are of course huge areas of unused land in Central, Western, and South Australia, but these are different, because they are not at present for the most part usable any more than the mountains of Italy or the deserts of Africa, but the north of Australia is different; the rainfall is for the most part good, and the land is capable of supporting a considerable population, making all exceptions for the considerable amount of useless country. Up to the time that the Labour Party came into power the whole question of the Northern Territory was simply allowed to drift. It must always be remembered to the credit of the Labour Party that they did at least try to solve the problem.

The solution they adopted was that of trying to settle the north with a white population. They cannot be accused of failure to spend money in a wholesale fashion, but the result cannot be considered as satisfactory. Their methods were curious for a democracy. The first step was to abolish the Government Resident, who had hitherto sufficed to conduct affairs and administer justice, and appoint an Administrator with the title of Excellency and absolute and autocratic powers. The

gentleman appointed for seven years to this post, Dr. Gilruth, was a man of character and strong personality, of vigour and determination, as he had need to be considering the very great difficulties of his position, and he has carried out vigorously and conscientiously the policy of those who appointed him, without allowing considerations of expense, or consideration for things as they were, to stand in his way. He has been unsparing of himself, and he has faced difficulties with courage and resolution. The white residents are entirely disfranchised, and have no voice in the administration of local affairs. A local council was indeed formed to advise the Administrator, but at its first meeting it had the temerity to disagree with His Excellency. I have not heard of its meeting since. The Administrator was supported by a host of Heads of Departments and other officials sent up from Melbourne. These excellent gentlemen were paid from £750 to £900 a year to enable them to support their banishment to the tropics, and had a garden city provided a mile out of town for their residence, though even then they were by no means always content! None of them were accustomed to tropical conditions. Altogether they formed a staff sufficient to run a State of half a million inhabitants and seemed rather out of place in a State of three thousand, for the greatest dignity was maintained in titles, rank, precedence, and ceremonial. Personally, all these gentlemen were most excellent fellows, and in manners and morals have certainly set a good example to the Northern Territory, but I cannot but feel that they were handicapped by circumstances and by their inexperience of tropical conditions. I have never ceased to wonder why the Commonwealth did not get half a dozen experienced men from North Queensland. They would have been glad to come at half the salaries, and would have saved much time and many useless experiments.

The Administrator and his staff set to work with

energy and with an honest determination to succeed if it were possible. Experiments which had been tried and failed before were tried over again with lavish expenditure of money and an elaborate scientific staff. The results were not encouraging, and it is difficult to see what there is to show for the vast expenditure of money and effort. Numerous settlers were induced to come up from the south, but unfortunately nearly every boat took as many south, full of exasperation and grievances. Even were the land better than it is, there is no market, and there will be none till the population is enormously increased, but apart from the officials and those working on various Government schemes the population shows no sign of increase.

It is difficult to know what to do. It is hard to blame the Labour Party. If its schemes were grandiose and costly, they were at any rate on the only possible lines apart from indented labour, and the only thing seems to be to continue them at yet greater cost than in the past and with some possible modification of method. The three possible industries are agricultural, mining, and pastoral. The chief efforts of the authorities have been devoted to trying to prove that agriculture can be made a success in the Northern Territory with white labour. These efforts have been almost entirely without success. Mining probably deserves more help than it has received, for the work, being underground, is more possible for white labour. The pastoral industry has received the least encouragement and attention, but is probably that which is most suited to the country. Unfortunately it employs less labour in proportion than any other industry, in addition to the fact that stations are often largely worked with aboriginal stockmen.

It has been suggested that the problem might be solved by a colour line dividing off North Australia, and that within it coloured labour and settlement might be

allowed. I am not sure that this proposal deserves the contempt with which it is dismissed by the advocates of White Australia. The argument brought forward against it is that the coloured population would be sure to drift south. I consider this to be a purely imaginary danger. Those who crossed would be immediately discovered and sent back if the White Australia rule prevailed in the rest of Australia. The real difficulty would be to prevent white wasters from drifting north and demoralizing the coloured population. If it were possible to prevent this, the adoption of this suggestion would add largely to the wealth of Australia, and by the use of the northern lands prevent their being coveted by other nations.

Some definite action seems imperative, in view of the rapid development of Japan and the probable development of China. Had Germany been successful in the war, the very least of her demands on Australia would have been the cession of the empty and useless Northern Australia, and the pouring into it of hordes of all kinds of coloured labour.

A few words should be said about the climate. Considering its proximity to the Equator (10 to 20 degrees south), the climate of Northern Queensland is remarkably cool, and tolerable by white men. The Northern Territory is much hotter than Northern Queensland, which is much more subject to sea breezes. Darwin has a mean maximum temperature which is, I believe, exceeded only by very few in the world at which a record is kept. The temperature curve in Knibbs' "Year-Book of Australia" is sufficiently startling.

Generally speaking, tropical Australia can be divided into two sections—the table-lands, where in places I have seen 8 degrees of frost in winter; and the low-lying and coastal lands, where most of the population have to reside. The table-lands are healthy, and the extreme heat of the day is compensated for by, as a rule,

cool nights and by a more or less cold winter. The low-lying lands are different. Men can work and remain on them for long periods, perhaps twenty or thirty years, without visible impairment of health, especially if precautions are taken not to contract malarial fever. It is certain, however, that their health is to some extent affected, and that they cannot do the same amount of work, by perhaps 20 to 25 per cent., as they can do in the south of Australia. This was practically admitted by that ardent advocate of white labour, the Administrator of the Northern Territory, when he reduced the working hours of the Government officials and employees, as well as by his explicit statement on the subject.

With women and children it is different. They are, as a rule, unable to stand the climate, except on the table-lands, without serious injury to health. The proof is that every man who is able to do so sends his wife and family down south every other year if possible, while many keep them permanently there, only visiting home at intervals. The cost of maintaining two homes is so great that men would never do this without real need. It is not the discomfort of life in the north that takes women to the south, it is their continual, though not always serious, ill-health. It remains to be seen whether the tropical lowlands will ever evolve a race of white women and children who can maintain their health there. As yet they have not done so. One cannot help smiling sometimes at the numerous Members of Parliament who make a picnic visit by steamer to Darwin, invariably only in the month of June, the one fairly cool month of the year, and walking about with a sun hat or umbrella exclaim, "This is a delightful climate; a man could work here just as well as in New South Wales"; but they do not try, and one would like to see them occasionally in December or January. I can conscientiously recommend Darwin at that time

of year to those who wish to know what continuous heat is like.

It is an interesting question as to how far the White Australia ideal will be modified by the war. Before it, many Australians, to judge by some of the newspapers, hardly regarded an Asiatic as a human being at all, or recognized that he possessed any rights at all at the hands of that infinitely superior being, the Australian working man. Occasionally there was a nasty shock, as when a worthy but not very highly educated sub-collector of Customs asked a Japanese commercial agent to comply with the law by writing from dictation a certain number of lines in some European language before he was allowed to land. The Japanese replied, "I speak and write English, French, German, Spanish, Russian, Italian, and Portuguese, but as I suppose you do not understand anything but English, you had better examine me in that language." He then sat down and wrote out from memory fifty lines of Gray's "Elegy." It was a still greater shock to find that the first contingent of troops that went from Australia to Egypt owed its safety on the voyage to the protection of Japanese warships. The sterling fighting qualities of the Turks and the Indian troops have driven the lesson home, and it is probable that Australian language towards these peoples at least will be somewhat modified in the future, but it is not clear that there will be any less insistence on the White Australia policy.

Meanwhile progress in the Northern Territory is at a standstill owing to the war, and the peril to Australia remains.

CHAPTER IX

LOOKING FOR CHARLIE (1902)

I LEFT Thursday Island at daylight on May 4, 1902, in the ketch *Melbidir*, in company with Dr. R., Protector of Aborigines. About 8 A.M. we struck heavily about five miles from land on one of the banks projecting from Prince of Wales Island. The tide was very nearly full, and our position an uncomfortable one. We lay about one hundred yards from the edge of the bank, which was very level to all appearance. As the newspapers say, "There was no panic among the passengers," and the crew worked hard to retrieve our misfortune. An anchor was got out, and the boat's head got round, and then all sails were reset, and we tried to force our way out. At first we did not move at all, but gradually an imperceptible motion began which at its quickest did not exceed a foot in a minute, not an exhilarating rate of speed when you know that the tide is beginning to fall, and that it will not rise again for twenty-four hours. Inch by inch we made our way, and happily the tide fell very slowly, and after four hours we reached the edge of the reef, without any deepening of water or increase of speed, until we slid down into deep water amid a general cheer. We had to keep far out to sea after this, and had a rough passage, making the land again soon after daybreak, and reaching the mouth of the Batavia River about 11 A.M. The land is very low, and the opening about two miles across, expanding into a fine bay some seven miles in diameter, into which the Batavia River runs. The river is navigable for some

AUSTRALIAN NATIVE IN THE GULF OF CARPENTARIA

THESE FRAIL-LOOKING RAFTS ARE FEARLESSLY USED BY NATIVES ALTHOUGH SHARKS ABOUND IN THE WATERS OF THE GULF

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twenty-five miles, and there is no bar of any kind. Some day it will probably be a much-frequented harbour.

The Mapoon Mission Reserve occupies the southern headland, and is situated in a sheltered bay with a most beautiful beach. The superintendent, the Rev. N. Hey, kindly offered hospitality to the whole party, which was very welcome, as the vessel had to be careened and cleaned. The Mission station had been in existence for ten years, and it is practically the work of one man, the Rev. N. Hey. Originally he had with him his brother-in-law, the Rev. J. G. Ward, but since his death, some six years previously, Mr. Hey had had no assistance whatever save his wife, sister-in-law, and one South Sea Islander for part of the time. The soil is sandy, and the natural advantages very few indeed. Both Mr. Hey and Mr. Ward were Moravians, but the Mission is under the auspices of the Presbyterian Mission Board in Brisbane.

The work accomplished by Mr. Hey and his few helpers, both in regard to material adaptations and influence on the natives, was simply marvellous. There were some hundred and fifty aboriginals living permanently on the station, about twenty married couples, in good houses, a number of young and old men, and the boarded children. Most of the young men go bêche-de-mer fishing and earn a few pounds. All their money is put into a common fund, and they are supplied with tools, etc., as they want them. Before a man can marry he has to give six months' work on the garden, or at timber-getting and cutting, and a house is then built for him.

The hours of work are from early morning to four in the afternoon, and the men work well and steadily, though slowly. All the timber is got and sawn and dressed by the natives, almost without direction.

The soil of the garden had been all made by sea-weed manure, carried from the beach with incredible labour. It is now very productive.

The beaches are very beautiful, and are covered with lovely and, sometimes, rare shells, in the most bountiful profusion.

Nothing could exceed the kindness and hospitality of Mr. Hey and his party. The day after our arrival was made a holiday, and the sports excited the most lively interest.

We left Mapoon in the *Melbidir* early in the morning of Saturday, May 10. There was scarcely enough wind to take us out of the harbour, but it gradually freshened, and we ran down the coast about two miles from the shore, passing the mouth of the Pennefather River about midday. About sunset we anchored to the north of Duyfhen Point. There was a heavy swell, which made the boat ride uncomfortably. The land is all low. Standing well out from the land to avoid shoals, we made an early start, and stood across the Bay, which is about seventeen miles wide, nearly to Pera Head, and then up the southern shore, towards the mouth of the Embley River, which we reached about 4 P.M. The entrance is difficult, as sandbanks stretch on either side of the narrow channel, up which we had to tack against a stiff breeze. The captain felt his way in over the uncharted banks with great skill. Fortunately the tide was running in, as the channel just at the entrance is only about a hundred yards wide or less. Inside it widens to half a mile or more, and the river is over a mile wide. In the deepening twilight we tacked up for about twelve miles, and it was quite dark when we reached the junction of the Embley and the Hey Rivers, where we were to meet the Mission cutter, the *J. G. Ward*, which had left Mapoon the day before we did, and arrived a few hours before us. We had to fire a gun to ascertain their whereabouts, but finally succeeded in getting a light, and anchored under a low red cliff.

At daylight on Monday we transferred ourselves to the *J. G. Ward*, as the *Melbidir* drew too much water to go

up farther. The wind was light, but the tide was with us, and we drifted and sailed up the river for about five miles until the tide turned and we had to anchor. The river is about a quarter of a mile wide, with high mangrove-covered banks. When we were at anchor a native, attired in a piece of string, came alongside in a bark canoe. These canoes, of which we saw several at Mapoon, are made of a single sheet of bark, with a triangular piece cut out of each end and sewn up. A couple of sticks are tied across, and the canoe is complete, save for a shell to bail with. The paddle is made out of the stem of a mangrove, with the natural spread of the root for blade.

The man had been employed in shelling, and spoke a little English. The lobe of each ear was cut out in the centre, and distended into an enormous loop, capable of holding a small Van Houten's cocoa tin. When not thus ornamented the loop is hitched up round the top of the ear.

We got under way again about 3 P.M. and floated up the river until dark, when we ran upon a shoal, and took the dinghy and rowed up the river by moonlight for about six miles to the Weipa landing, where we fired a shot to attract attention, and were met by Mr. Brown, in charge of the station, which is about three-quarters of a mile distant.

Two of the men from the Moreton telegraph station came to meet us with horses, and we left Weipa about 9 A.M., and travelling through good cattle country, very green in spite of the drought elsewhere, passed York Downs station at fourteen miles, and camped at Fox Creek, ten miles beyond. We got a good start next morning, and rode through very fair country, still green, and with very long grass, to Moreton telegraph station, on the Upper Batavia River, a beautiful and always running stream.

The telegraph station is ingeniously built to resist

attack. The whole exterior is of iron, and the buildings are on piles about ten feet high, in the form of a square, enclosing a small courtyard. A space of a few inches is left between every few sheets of the iron enclosure, so that the courtyard and space under the building command all the country round by a series of loop-holes. The windows are fourteen feet above the ground. The stairs open upon the interior court, so that when the entrance gate is closed the occupants can sleep in peace and safety, and one man could repel a large number of natives. One operator, two repairers, and a cook form the staff of each station. Happily the relations with the natives in the neighbourhood are now such as to render these precautions no longer necessary.

In the morning we visited the native camp, and saw one very tall man, six feet three in height. These natives go down to the east coast, which is said to be not more than thirty miles distant, though no one has been across.

After breakfast we set out to visit the telegraph master from the Mein, who had arranged to come half-way to meet us. We camped for dinner at a fine lagoon, which, as yet lacking a name, was named Bishop's Lagoon in my honour. After supper one of the men rigged up a tent fly with an end of coloured blankets, in front of which were stuck in the ground two tall sticks split at the end to hold a candle, making quite a little chapel, where we had service for the first time on this telegraph line, which does not appear to have been ever visited by a clergyman.

Next morning we set off on our return journey, and camped for dinner again at Bishop's Lagoon. Here Dr. R. showed me an interesting thing he had learnt from the natives. Choosing a ti-tree with a narrow longitudinal bulge on one side, about six feet above the ground, he struck it with a tomahawk, and a plentiful stream of water gushed out, fully half a gallon in amount.

We caught some of it in a pannikin, and found it perfectly good and drinkable, though it had a somewhat saline taste. Many a man is in urgent need of water when passing a dried-up ti-tree swamp, and few know how easily it may be obtained. We got back to Moreton about 6 P.M. on Saturday, and were not sorry to learn, after our four days' ride, that we could spend a quiet Sunday there, having been afraid that we should have had to go straight on in order to keep up to time with the arrangements that had been made.

On Monday morning Dr. R. and I set off on a fresh expedition to investigate certain charges that were made with regard to the alleged murder of certain aborigines a few weeks before. We were accompanied by one of the line repairers, who afterwards met with a tragic fate. He was a cheery and steady young fellow, and had saved enough money to go home to Scotland to be married. Shortly after our visit he got a severe attack of dengue fever, and when in delirium shot himself dead.

We rode all day and camped at night by a water-hole in fresh country. A runner had been sent to warn the natives of our coming, and to ask them to bring the body of one of the supposed murdered men for Dr. R.'s inspection. The charge was that a certain white man, who had been sent on certain business connected with the natives, had allowed the armed natives by whom he was accompanied to attack and kill the members of a certain tribe without warning or provocation, when he might have accomplished his mission without bloodshed or trouble, and that he had returned and reported that he had never seen the natives at all.

About 10 P.M., just as we were turning in, we heard a plaintive wailing cry in the far distance gradually approaching us, and presently lights gleamed among the trees, and we saw a procession of about a hundred natives with torches, bearing the body of the man.

As they gradually advanced with shrill cries of lamentation among the flickering shadows of the trees the scene was inexpressibly weird.

In the morning Dr. R. examined the body, which had been roughly embalmed and was well preserved. It was enclosed in bark and tied to a horizontal pole for carrying. The natives described to us the attack with extraordinary vividness. They were all bathing in a certain water-hole when suddenly the assailants galloped up from the south-west and opened fire; two old men, so old that they had to be carried on the shoulders of their great-grandchildren, had fallen at the first discharge, and two young men, Charlie and Jimmie, had been shot as they were trying to get away. The rest had managed to escape by swimming under water to the farther end of the lagoon, and one woman was taken away, but afterwards released. The natives had immediately removed the bodies of Charlie and Jimmie, and on the following day the attacking party had returned and burned the bodies of the two old men which had not been removed. Dr. R. knew Charlie well as a boy of excellent character and much intelligence and a steady upholder of law and order; the body showed a wound such as might well have been made by a bullet, but of this there was no sign. We were informed that the body was that of Jimmie and that the body of Charlie had been placed in a tree about twenty miles towards the east coast.

We determined to visit Charlie's grave, and also to see the place of the supposed massacre, and set off, accompanied by three natives as guides.

It was a wild and lonely part of the country, and we travelled with some difficulty owing to a number of creeks, and in some places thick scrub. Our guides were not prepossessing, the chief being distinguished by a bright blue forehead over red painted cheeks, and his reputation did not belie his appearance. All three were

rather shady characters, but it was very interesting to ride behind and watch their alertness for every movement of the bush; each tree was scanned for a possible lizard or bees' nest, each likely tuft of grass prodded with a spear for a kangaroo-rat or bandicoot, each hollow trunk searched for an opossum. They moved through the long grass with bare feet and legs and apparently little fear of snakes, though once they came on one and jumped high into the air to avoid it. We reached our destination on the eastern watershed, not many miles from the coast, and found the body of Charlie, also carefully embalmed and hung up in a tree. An examination of the body again showed a wound through the body, but no bullet. We camped near by, and next morning the line-repairer went out to look for the horses. He had a revolver with him, but Dr. R. and I were both unarmed.

I had an idea that it was rather a noble kind of thing to do not to carry arms, but as we waited with the natives, of whom one we knew had committed a murder and the other two had attempted it, I came to the conclusion that it was rather silly. Engaged as I was in missionary work I should have objected to kill a native even in self-defence, but I saw that to be unarmed was simply to invite attack and to put temptation in the way of a savage who would never dream of attacking one whom he knew to have weapons. We were careful not to show that we were unarmed, and presently our friend turned up with the horses. That day we travelled through forest country to the south-west, and camped for the night at a fine water-hole. The whole of the country through which we passed was wonderfully green and well watered. I was astonished to find so much excellent country uninhabited and unstocked. I had thought that the northern part of the Peninsula was a sandy waste, but I doubt if any part of Queensland, that year at any rate, had been so blessed with rain and

good grass, and it will probably one day be closely settled, as the nearness to the sea on both sides renders it practically all coast land, and it is deeply indented by fine navigable rivers, such as the Batavia, Ducie, Bertiehaugh, Embley, and others.

In the course of the afternoon we had noticed that one of our guides had disappeared, and we had taken good care that the other two did not get an opportunity of following his example, as we needed them to show us the water-hole where the attack had been made. It was a beautiful moonlight night. I was sleeping in a hammock slung between two trees, and the line-repairer underneath me, while the two natives slept by the camp fire a little way off. I do not think any of us slept very soundly. About midnight I woke up and looking towards the fire saw the two natives gradually raising themselves inch by inch. When they got to their hands and knees the man under me suddenly sat up and the natives dropped instantly and began snoring loudly. This was repeated at intervals during the night, and we were glad when morning came. We soon reached the water-hole, and found the recent tracks of shod horses at a gallop leading to it from the south-west. As there had never been any white man in this part of the country the fact was a strong corroboration of the statements we had heard, but we had further.

On the banks of the creek we found the remains of a big fire, evidently made by a white man, as the natives never make a fire of big logs lighted in the centre. On searching the ashes we came upon several knee-caps and other human bones and two skulls. Under one of the skulls was a little lump of lead of the exact weight of the bullets which had been supplied, as we knew, to the assailants, a large and unusual size. We could find no cartridge-cases—they had evidently been carefully picked up—but we had sufficient evidence to induce the Commissioner of Police to make the journey

up from Brisbane to investigate for himself, and such justice as was possible was eventually done.

I may say here that then and always afterwards I found the Queensland Government most anxious on all occasions to do impartial justice to the natives. Undoubtedly the latter have often suffered cruel wrongs, but these were owing to the vast distances and the impossibility of getting evidence to convict the wrongdoer.

They were the acts of irresponsible individuals secure in the loneliness of the bush, and the Government and the police were always anxious to protect the blacks. The chief trouble lies in the jury system, as it was almost impossible to get a white jury to convict a white man of any outrage, however flagrant, on an aboriginal. I cannot personally recall any case in which a prosecution has been successful, but cases of cruelty and murder have become much fewer of late years, partly because of the increase of Missions, but also very largely because it is known that the wrongdoer can expect no sympathy or connivance on the part of the authorities, and even if he escapes conviction he is now likely to have a bad time with public opinion.

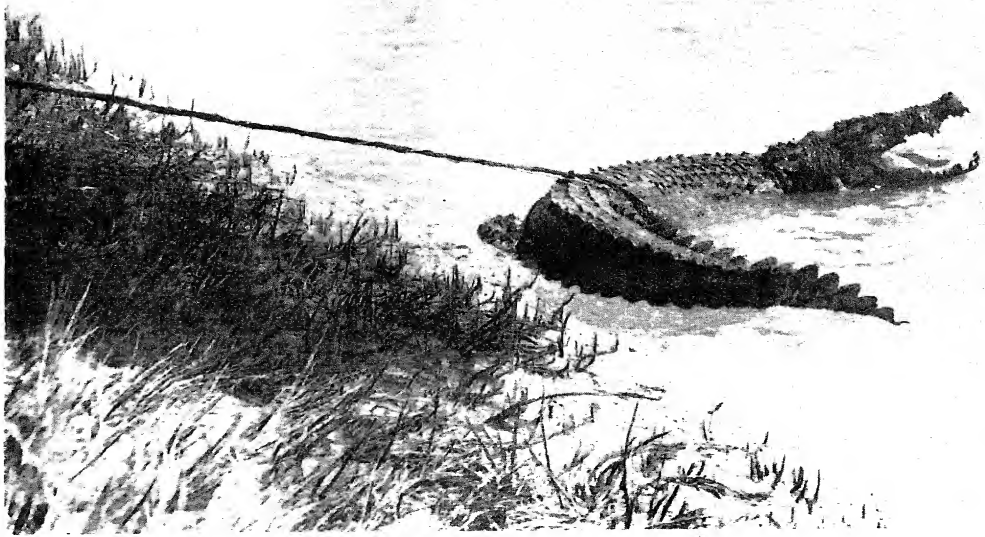
We travelled along a native track the whole of the following day, through good forest country, back to the telegraph line near the Moreton. A very striking native camp was passed, called Olbeli. It is situated right on the top of a hill in a grove of zamia-trees, in a carefully chosen strategic position, and different from any other camp I have seen, consisting of two or three long tunnel-like humpies some thirty feet or more in length. They were fully weatherproof and very picturesque. About two miles farther on the same native road we passed a second native village, Apre-ino, built in the same way, but the tunnels were shorter. Every hut had stones for grinding the arrowroot, as they call the zamia-nut, which is eaten after being soaked to deprive it of its poison.

We had not intended to be out so long, and we were

very glad to see the Moreton again, with empty pack-bags and hungry stomachs.

Next morning, Friday, we left the Moreton with agreeable memories of the kindness with which we had been welcomed, and reached Weipa Mission station on the Saturday evening. As we were already three days behind time we made no delay, but embarked with four boys in a whale-boat, which Mr. Brown kindly provided, and leaving the landing at 10.15 P.M. had a heavy pull of seventeen miles down to the mouth of the Embley. We took one of the oars in turn, so as to give each of the boys a spell, but the tide soon turned against us, and we were very glad to reach the *Melbidir* at 4 A.M. on Sunday morning, having ridden two hundred and fifty miles in ten days and ended the last day with a hard night's work, the three boys together doing about as much work as the one white man who was rowing. They were beginning to be anxious on board, as they had been waiting for us since Tuesday. We turned in for a couple of hours, and managed to put about six hours' sleep into it. I was much pleased with the result of my journey, as it not only enabled me to visit and minister to the whites, but gave me an insight into the life and character of the real myall native, and an incidental opportunity of aiding the Doctor in his efforts for their welfare.

About 1 P.M. we left the anchorage and went down the river, getting on to a shoal and remaining there for several hours. About sunset we got outside the point and anchored close to the beach. We saw a large number of natives, and Dr. R. landed to settle a dispute. It appeared that a certain man had duly bought his wife and paid full value to her two brothers, who admitted that they had made a good bargain. However, a third brother turned up and demanded to be paid too, but the bridegroom objected that he had already paid quite enough. In the meantime the family removed the wife until the bridegroom should pay up, and had tried to



A MAN-EATING ALLIGATOR CAUGHT BY A SNARE IN THE NORMAN RIVER. HE WAS FOAMING WITH RAGE WHEN THE ENTERPRISING PHOTOGRAPHER APPROACHED TO TAKE THIS PICTURE

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quicken payment by spearing both the husband and the wife. A kind of court was held, and the matter finally arranged by the bridegroom consenting to pay the third brother a pint of flour, in full satisfaction of all claims. A simple calculation will show the currency value of a native Australian bride.

The coast south of Pera Head is somewhat difficult to navigate, the land being absolutely flat, with a stretch of sandy beach backed by low trees, running, without a break other than a few almost invisible river-mouths, for nearly three hundred miles. It is consequently rather difficult for the amateur navigator to be sure of his position, even if he is lucky enough not to strike one of the numerous submerged sandbanks which extend in places six miles from the land. A nasty sea gets up very quickly in the shallow water. We resumed our voyage to the south, and on reaching the mouth, or rather mouths, of the Mitchell River, waited several days for the Rev. E. R. Gribble and an inspector of police who were to travel overland and meet us.

One day I went with the captain in the dinghy up the North Mitchell. We reached a spot where a native track came down to the river and led from it on the farther bank. Drawn up on the shore were a dozen swimming logs. A native of this part never crosses a river without such a log. It is of light mangrove, about eight feet long and about seven inches in diameter, tapering to about three inches. The native swims with his breast on the thick end and the thin end projecting behind him. I frequently asked the natives why they would not swim without a log, and they said that it was on account of the alligators, as the crocodiles are always called in Queensland; they declared that when the alligator saw them on the log he thought it was another alligator and left them alone. I am not prepared to say that their explanation was correct, but we saw a very big alligator lying on the bank about a hundred yards

below the crossing, so that their precaution may have been justified. On our return we took a wrong channel and found our way blocked by a sandbank. We had to get out and walk in the water nearly up to the waist to get the boat off again. As we were in the water we saw the fin of a shark rapidly approaching.

The skipper offered to get into the boat and shoot him with his revolver. He got in accordingly, while I and the two men waited in the water. As the shark came close he looked uncomfortably big, and we were relieved when the skipper fired and he sheered off. "Just as well," remarked the skipper. "I forgot to say that my revolver always jams after the first shot, and if I had missed him I could not have fired again."

We were short of water, and I did not then know that fresh water could usually be found just above high-water mark by digging in the sand. We waited four days after the set time for the land party, and then sailed away for Normanton. We afterwards heard that the travellers reached the beach just as we were leaving. They made frantic efforts to attract our attention, but we were too far away, and they had to turn back and retrace their steps for over three hundred miles. On their way they narrowly escaped being killed by the natives.

CHAPTER X

DOWN THE MITCHELL (1905)

In 1905 I made an interesting expedition down the Mitchell River, which rises in the high ranges close to the sea near Cairns, and runs for about four hundred miles across the base of the Cape York Peninsula, until it enters the sea on the eastern side of the Gulf of Carpentaria. The Queensland Government had at my request set apart a reserve of some six hundred square miles for the purpose of a Mission reserve for aborigines, and, after the Rev. E. R. Gribble had in the previous year made a six weeks' visit to prepare the way, a party was formed to open the Mission, consisting of three white men in addition to Mr. Gribble and myself, and four Christian aborigines, among whom was James Noble, a man of exceptionally high character and intelligence, who had had the advantage of some education, but was by birth a member of probably the least intelligent tribe in Australia, the natives of Mornington Island in the Gulf of Carpentaria.

I met the party on the morning of the third day after they left Yarrabah, on the upper waters of the Mitchell, among the lofty ranges inland from Port Douglas. I will again quote from my diary as giving a more vivid account of our journey than after-reminiscences:

"*May* 10. A thick fog early, which dispersed soon after seven with beautiful cloud effects on the mountains. About 10 A.M. the expedition appeared, Rev. E. R. Gribble,

Messrs. Millar, Field, and Williams, and the aboriginals James Noble, Grady, Bendigo, and Ernest, with thirty-one horses. I said good-bye to my hospitable hosts and left immediately. About noon we reached the spot where the road crosses the Mitchell, and while the rest of the party camped I rode across the river to Brooklyn station, about two miles distant. We left camp again at 3 P.M., and travelled down the river through well-grassed country till 6 P.M., when we camped on a lagoon. After tea we had our Evensong, and the hymns sounded well, sung by so many voices. One of our party is a sailor and the horse is a mystery to him, though he sticks to it gallantly; as he remarks, 'The steering gear is all right, but I can't get the run of the engines. They seem to be always dead slow or full speed ahead.' Heavy dew at night and cold.

"*Thursday, May* 11. Up at 6 A.M.; making up packs till 7 A.M.; breakfast and packing horses and ready to start by 8 A.M. (Saddling and packing thirty horses is hard work.) When all ready to mount we had a short service, holding our horses, and then off. Travelled all day through rather poor country. Weather very hot. I rode ahead to make the pace, but some of the pack-horses were very tired and we made only moderate progress. Camped for dinner about ten miles farther down the Mitchell, on a water-hole near a dry creek. Soon after dinner we left the Mitchell, leaving behind a Yarrabah pony which was done up, and travelled through dry ranges south of the river all the afternoon. About sunset we reached the top of the watershed between the Mitchell and the Hodgkinson, and had a fine view of the great cliffs of Mount Mulligan, to the south. There being no water, we had to travel on after dark till 7.30 P.M.; found water in a little creek a few miles from the Hodgkinson. The pack-horses and their drivers had considerable difficulty in following in the dark; fortunately there was a young moon. It was

9 P.M. before we finished tea, and after short Evensong all turned in pretty tired. Distance travelled, about twenty-four miles.

"*Friday, May* 12. Up early, but had to wait a long time after breakfast, as four of our horses had not come in; got off at 9 A.M. Crossed the Hodgkinson about a mile and a half from camp at a deserted station; then made much southing to avoid rough country till we struck the old road from Thornborough; along it for many dreary miles over small ranges to the junction of the Little Watson with the Mitchell at 1 P.M. Every one assimilated a large pint mug of the clear fresh Mitchell water, and then on without a halt until 4.30 P.M., when we camped on a rocky water-hole near the Big Watson, and enjoyed dinner and tea in one, all being hungry. Distance travelled, about twenty-three miles. All is working well and smoothly under Mr. Gribble's skilful organization. As soon as a halt is called every man catches the nearest of the nineteen pack-horses and unpacks; all the saddles and packs are arranged in a square and covered with a tarpaulin, except those needed for the night; every one has two horses to ride and carry his pack alternately, morning and evening, the rest being only packs. At the midday halt the same business has to be gone through, and we can now pack up in less than half an hour; but it is only Mr. Gribble's energy and decision that render the job such a quick one. The black boys have other work, so that each white man has to pack four horses in addition to catching and saddling his riding-horse. About 6 P.M. some travelling cattle passed, and the owner, who had just killed, offered to send us over some fresh beef, but it never turned up.

"*Saturday, May* 13. Got off at 8.15; travelled till 12.30; passed a fine water-hole in a large stream about 10.15 A.M.; camped in a gorge in the hills where there was water. Country hilly and dry, but less rough than

yesterday. In the afternoon we had a thunder-storm which wet every one thoroughly, and soon afterwards we camped on the Dry River and put up tents, as the weather continued threatening, about three miles from the O.K. copper mine. Distance travelled, about twenty-four miles.

"*Sunday, May* 14. At 7.15 A.M. celebrated the Holy Communion in the open air. With the just-risen sun shining in his morning beauty behind the little temporary altar one appreciated the force of the words, 'Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.' After breakfast Grady and I rode into the O.K. mine. We passed a long string of camels, at which Grady and our horses opened their eyes wide. I was hospitably welcomed by the mine manager, Mr. Gibbs, and his wife, and made arrangements to hold evening service in the office. The town is mostly canvas, but a large number of men are employed. It is about twelve miles from the southern border of the diocese, on the road from Mungana to Maytown. In the afternoon Mr. Gribble came in from the camp, and after tea we had service in the assay room of the office, which was fitted up with temporary seats. There was a good attendance at this the first religious service ever held at the O.K. mine, and the singing of the hymns was very hearty. Mr. Gribble went back to camp and I stayed the night.

"*Monday, May* 15. Mr. Gibbs kindly undertook to have three of our horses shod, and Mr. Gribble and two of the boys came in with them about 10 A.M. The boys were very much interested in the camels. 'They have an island on their back,' said one, referring to the hump. There are about four hundred on the road to Mungana, but they cannot carry away the matte fast enough to keep the smelter running full time, and it works only two shifts a day. The lode seems to be very large and very rich. Several of the shoes had to be made, and we did not get away till 12.30, when we returned to camp, had dinner,

and packed up, getting off about 3 P.M. We passed through the outskirts of the township at three miles, and then followed down the Dry River for about seven miles, camping on a good water-hole at 6 P.M. Distance travelled, about ten miles.

"*Tuesday, May* 16. Left camp at 8.20 A.M. Crossed the Mitchell after about five miles, and then on another five to Bellevue station, where there was only the cook at home. Camped about 1 P.M. to rest the horses, tired with last week's hard travelling over the ranges; spent the afternoon fishing and exploring. Travelled eleven miles. The river here is a beautiful broad running stream.

"*Wednesday, May* 17. Left camp at 8 A.M., grass long and dry and track difficult to find. Reached Mount Mulgrave, twelve miles distant, at 11.15 A.M., and camped just beyond the station, which commands a fine view of the river. Mr. ——, the owner, kindly sent a boy off to the Walsh station, twenty-two miles distant, to take in some telegrams for me, and to fetch any awaiting me. At 3 P.M. the party moved to a camp six miles farther down the river, while I waited overnight for the return of the boy with the telegrams. Mr. —— most kind and hospitable."

For the next twelve days we travelled on down the course of the Mitchell River with no track, and having often difficulty in getting anywhere near the river on account of the high banks and dense scrub. I resume my diary:

"*Monday, May* 29. A thick fog in the early morning. Left camp at 8.45 A.M., and travelled nine miles through long grass in which the packs were quite invisible. Many recent tracks and traces of blacks, but only saw their fires, though the grass was so thick that they might have been within a few yards of us without being seen.

Camped at 11.45 A.M. on a swamp shortly after crossing a big creek. After dinner went on six or seven miles, and camped in the bed of Magnificent Creek. Crossed the tracks of a number of blacks a few hours old. Mosquitoes very bad almost for the first time.

"*Tuesday, May* 30. Left camp 9.20 A.M., and reached the borders of the reserve about 10.30. Country burnt here for some miles. At 12.30 reached a fine lagoon with wild pig on the banks. Killed a wallaby and a number of ducks and camped for dinner, 'at home' for the first time after our long journey. Weather much cooler and pleasanter; breeze from the west off the sea, here about twenty miles distant. After dinner passed through some beautiful plain and forest country with long green grass of excellent quality. About 4 P.M. we passed the spot where we had met the blacks on my last visit, near Old Bosworth, and soon after passed Cobaio, a deep lagoon surrounded by dense scrub. About 5.30 we sighted our destination, Yeremundo, and rounding the end of the lagoon we saw the log-house, erected by Mr. Gribble in November last, still standing, with its grass roof browned by the sun. It looked quite home-like, and showed that the natives had faithfully kept their promise to look after it. We found the grass all round neatly cleared, and a note from Inspector Galbraith, who was to meet us here, to say that he could not wait beyond the specified date, the 25th, and had left the following day. As we were five days late, we were very glad he had not waited any longer. I was glad also to find in a hollow tree, to which the note directed me, a letter from the Rev. W. M. Wilkinson and some newspapers which he had kindly sent out. Some of our party were very tired and glad of the prospect of a day's rest, while Mr. Gribble and I went into Rutland Plains.

"*Wednesday, May* 31. After breakfast Mr. Gribble and I, with John Grady, rode into Rutland Plains, which is about ten miles to the south, to post letters and get some

stores which Mr. Gribble left here last year. We got back about 6.15 P.M. and saw a big camp of blacks who had arrived shortly before, Bendigo and James Noble having found their camp on the Magnificent and told them of our arrival. They were part of the Koko Widdee tribe, the same that I met two years ago. The 'King,' a fine old fellow, had come in early in the day to look after the house, which Mr. Gribble had left in his charge. As a reward for his diligence in taking care of it we gave him some tobacco, and I presented him with a siren whistle, which he blew with admirable gravity. There were about fifty men and youths and some old women and young children, but one could not but note the absence of younger women. With the whites one sees almost always young aboriginal women, hardly any old. Here is one cause of the disappearance of the race. It is said, and truly, that the young women often do not object to leaving their tribe. They naturally prefer a station or a town, with plenty to eat and little to do, to the bush life; but what about the men? Is it fair to them to leave them only the old and sick women whom the white man does not desire to keep? Is it strange that they resent being deprived of their women, even when violent means are not employed? After Evensong we went up to the blacks' camp and witnessed a corroboree. I had seen the civilized blacks' corroboree without much interest, but this was different. Some of the songs and dances were very weird. One song had a real and striking tune and a chorus. Several of those present had taken part in the attack on Inspector Garraway and Mr. Gribble's camp in 1902.

"*Thursday, June* 1. After breakfast talked through Grady to a number of natives, and tried to explain the pictures on a Church almanack. All seemed very pleased to see Mr. Gribble back. Started about 10.30, and at 1.30 reached Yanda Swamp, where we camped. About forty natives accompanied us, and many more

arrived in the course of the day. After tea we went to the camp for Evensong. It was quite dark, but as there was no wind we carried a couple of candles, which dimly outlined about sixty blacks seated in a half-circle, with the women and children behind.

"We sat down in front with Grady as interpreter, while the old king gravely walked over and seated himself at our side. We sang "O God our help in ages past," the blacks preserving complete silence until the conclusion of our short service, the meaning of which was first explained. Then Mr. Gribble, through Grady, gave a most practical address, easy to understand and interpret, something in this style:

"'First the Bishop says thank you that you looked after the house and kept it in good order.'

"'The Missionaries have kept their word. They said they would be back in six moons, and they are here.'

"'We very glad to hear you have not speared any cattle since our last visit.' [Grins of conscious virtue on the part of the audience.]

"'We are here to teach you about God the Father, Who made you and the grass and the trees and the women too.'

"'We do not want to make you like white men, but good blackfellow; still walk about, still catch possum and wallaby, still make good corroboree, but not kill cattle, not steal, not fight other blackfellow, not swear, not hit wife on head with waddy [symptoms of disapproval at this prohibition among the audience], and wife too, she not talk-talk to husband.' [Sudden revival of approval in the front rows, and an emphatic click of assent.]

"The boundaries of the reserve were explained, and they were warned not to trespass, and to bring their sick to the Mission station, and were promised protection while they behaved well. All seemed very simple, but I was lost in admiration of the skill of the address. John

Grady was in his element, translating with eloquent gesticulations.

"*Friday, June* 2. Left at 8.30 A.M. and travelled west for three hours, camping on the south side of Trubanaman Lagoon, our destination, the best site for the Mission so far as we have been able to ascertain. Trubanaman, a great resort for all the blacks, is a lagoon of which the western end is about eight miles from the coast; it extends for several miles inland and is about fifty yards wide, and covered with the edible water-lily which forms the main food of the blacks. The ground at the south is high, and at the point we have chosen it is slightly higher than usual, with a small flat suitable for a garden just in front; while close by is another flat sloping gently down to the lagoon, and excellently suited for cultivation. It is not on any creek, and appears to be secure from flood. How near goods can be brought we do not yet know. It is about eight miles from the southern border of the reserve, and with a station here and an out-station at Yeremundo we should be well in touch with the whole reserve.

"*Saturday, June* 3. After breakfast a number of blacks came and helped in clearing grass; then Messrs. Miller and Williams started to put up permanent tents and shift the camp on to the rising ground in the centre of what will be the Mission enclosure. Meanwhile Mr. Gribble and I set out to explore the country, and made a long round to the south as far as Topsy's Creek. We finally found a deep salt-water arm running up to within two miles of the station. It is difficult to judge how far this point may be from the sea, but we hope to be able to bring the cutter up to it. On our return we helped to finish the camp, erecting in the centre a large fly to serve as a church. Here we held Evensong, and were all very glad to be able to worship again in a building, however humble. A bright lad named Boanduagullin and one or two other young men have announced their

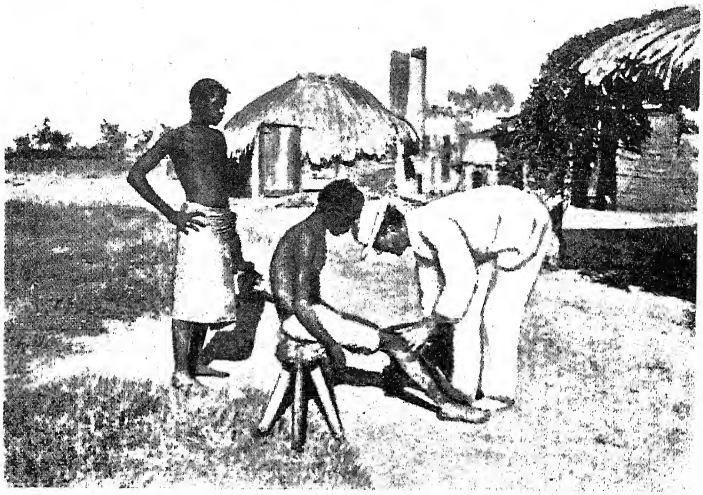
desire to stay and work at the Mission. After Evensong we had a meeting of the staff, and rules were drafted.

"*Sunday, June* 4. The first celebration of Holy Communion at the station. Earnest prayer for God's blessing and guidance. All very beautiful in the early morning with the sun shining on the big water-lilies in the lagoon behind the kneeling worshippers. Morning Prayer at 10 A.M., and then sketched out a plan for the buildings round a hundred-feet square, with the church in the centre, so that as each building is finished it may be put in the right place. Very much pleased with all we see of the Mission site.

"At night we had service at the camp; a hundred and fifty men were packed on three sides of a little square, and behind were the glimmering fires and tall spears stuck in the ground beside them, with the shadowy forms of the women and children. Mr. Gribble and James Noble gave addresses through Grady, and we sang several hymns. So far we have not met one native who speaks or understands any English, and only one or two have any semblance of clothing. After service Grady brought forward the largest man I ever saw. He was fully seven feet in height and magnificently proportioned. He looked, in the dim light, like one of a race of giants among pigmies. The top of my head barely reached his shoulder. He was, I found on measurement, over seven feet.

"*Monday, June* 5. In the morning we were busy erecting a temporary store. Immediately after dinner, Mr. Gribble and I, with Grady, rode down the northern branch of Trubanaman River. The salt water, which begins not far from the lagoon, quickly expands into a broad but winding stream. With a whale-boat goods could be brought very near to the station. I hope that the stores will arrive punctually, as we are very near the end of our provisions.

"*Tuesday, June* 6. Immediately after breakfast went



MASSAGING A STIFF LEG ON THE MITCHELL RIVER MISSION

THE MEDICAL WORK CONTINUES TO BE A CONSIDERABLE FEATURE OF THE MISSION

PLANTING CASSAVA AT THE MITCHELL RIVER

AGRICULTURE HAS BEEN GREATLY DEVELOPED AND A LARGE AMOUNT OF FOOD IS GROWN ON THE MISSION STATION

the hospital rounds with Mr. Gribble and Mr. Williams. Many terrible cases of disease among the men and women, especially the latter. Attended to about twenty cases; patients seemed very grateful. The words 'Sick and ye visited me' impressed deeply upon one by the sight of all these helpless people. Mr. Williams will be in charge of the hospital on Mr. Gribble's departure. The station is now assuming quite a settled appearance, being formed along a square facing the lagoon, with the church tent in the middle.

"We have bought a considerable number of spears, dilly-bags, shell ornaments, knives, etc., for hooks, lines, tobacco, pipes, etc., with the double object of giving the natives employment in making new ones, as, game being plentiful, they have a considerable amount of time on their hands, and preventing their resorting to illegitimate means to obtain these necessaries and luxuries. A certain number of young men have been put on regular work, grass-cutting, etc. At 10.30 A.M. Mr. Gribble and I started out to explore the country to the south-east. After passing two chains of lagoons, distant about one and a half and two and a half miles respectively, we came on Topsy Creek at about five miles from the Mission station. This beautiful chain of broad deep lagoons runs for many miles east and west and forms a kind of natural boundary to the south. It is beautiful cattle country and the water is all permanent."

CHAPTER XI

A PRIMITIVE FOLK (1905)

"*Wednesday, June* 7, 1905. The boat due to-morrow. Mr. G.and I, with Grady and a native, left the station at 8.30 A.M., and came out on the beach at about nine miles, at a point two and a half miles from the mouth of the Trubanaman Creek. We went north along the beach for nine miles, more to the south mouth of the Mitchell, but could not see anything of the boat. Camped on the beach near the point. After a little search found the native well we had used on my previous visit in 1903. It was almost filled up, but the boy set to work to dig with his hands, after testing the ground with his spear, and at about four feet six inches found water in very small quantity. We had only a quart pot to water our horses with, but managed it by putting a piece of oilcloth over a hole in the sand. The quart pot was filled with a shell and the hole with the quart, but it took a great many quarts to satisfy four thirsty horses. As for ourselves, we had some ducks which we brought with us, and laid on the coals, and some solid damper. All our baking powder and nearly all our flour is gone. All the luxuries, such as sugar, etc., have been used up more than a week ago, so it is to be hoped that the boat will not be late, otherwise we shall be starved out altogether. In the afternoon Mr. Gribble and the boys went fishing for supper, and I looked after the camp and watched for the boat. We have fixed up a flagstaff on the beach, and got the material for a fire to-night.

"*Thursday, June* 8. Breakfasted frugally the four of

us on a piece of cold fish and a few ounces of damper. No signs of the boat, she can hardly now be here up to time. Spent two hours watering with quart pot. Sent Grady in to Mission station for flour if they have any, of which I am doubtful. Boy speared a barramunda, so fortunately we have some dinner, but only a fragment of damper left. Grady should be back by dinner-time to-morrow. We are about thirteen miles from the station. Mr. Gribble has a touch of fever.

"*Friday, June* 9. Weather very calm, and fortunately not cold. Had a swim at daylight after making up the beacon fire: My birthday. Hardly the place and way one would have selected in which to spend it. No sign of the boat.

"Grady arrived at noon with a damper and a little flour. Man Friday caught some fine fish. Life not exciting—a sea without a ripple, a white beach, a few bushes, and that is all. The peninsula on which we are camped is only about a quarter of a mile wide, and all sand. In the afternoon had a walk, and collected a few shells.

"*Saturday, June* 10. Up four or five times in the night to replenish the signal fire. Another calm morning. Later, breeze from north-east sprang up and continued all day; ought to bring boat along. Went out with Man Friday, who speared two sting-rays. As soon as they were on shore he caught the end of the tail in his teeth, picked up a handful of sand and with it felt for and pulled out the sting, with which he pierced the brain. Many Koko Myndyuno about, to judge by the fires. These are the wildest tribe, and the only one with whom we have not come in contact. We are now on their territory. Sent Grady away to Bimbera water-hole, nine miles from here, with orders to go on to-morrow to Trubanaman for supplies if no sign of the boat, and return here on Monday morning. The situation is somewhat serious. We are out of almost everything at

the Mission station, even cartridges to get game with. I have sent in to Rutland Plains station to borrow two bags of flour. I do not know what we should do if the boat does not come soon. It is a good lesson in faith and patience. Everything has gone so well so far that perhaps we needed it. I get on well with Man Friday. We neither of us understand a word of each other's language, but that does not seem to matter much. When he catches a fish or loses one, he looks for interest and sympathy, and encourages in his own language when the horizon is bare of every boat. I have been reduced to making shell necklaces for an occupation. We are very primitive. We have only one broken pocket-knife, and have to manufacture plates, spoons, knives, etc., of shells. When we get back to the Mission station we shall feel ourselves in the height of luxury, even though their cupboard is as bare as ours. We have not been able to take off our clothes except for a bathe.

"*Whit-Sunday.* I certainly did not expect to spend this great festival on a sandbank with no possibility of celebrating the Holy Communion, but as we are in great need of guidance as to what course to pursue if the boat does not appear within the next two days, it is a comfort to remember that they are the days consecrated to the Spirit of Guidance.

"Last night, immediately after tea, it began to rain. We gathered our scanty belongings into a heap, and sat on them with a bit of oilcloth over our heads. When the storm was over, we dried the sand by making small fires on it, and turned in; but we had more rain during the night and had not a very comfortable time, awaking very damp and cramped in the morning. At daylight I went out and cut wood for our signal fires, so as to keep the day free. Mr. Gribble, who has been more or less ill since we have been here, is better to-day. Man Friday has just brought a cold cooked fish for breakfast. No sign of the boat.

"What a comforting thought this day is of the Divine Guidance. There are so many contingencies in life when judgment is impossible to man because he has no data, an infinite number also where the data are inadequate to enable him to judge with any degree of security. What a thought of comfort is the Divine Guidance, which only asks to be allowed to teach and to guide. With man it is impossible—with God all things are possible.

"*Whit-Monday, June* 12. Grady got back about 2.30 P.M., and Mr. Gribble and I set off at once for the station, and riding fast got in about 6.30 P.M., though we were delayed by one of the pack-houses getting tangled up in the scrub and by having to go round a large swamp. We passed a number of natives who were out hunting. We found all well, though very short of provisions. We are not able to give any food away, not having enough for ourselves; fortunately we have plenty of tobacco. The sick people are improving, and 'Bowen-down-a-gully,' which is the nearest approximation to the name of our first pupil, is getting on well with his letters. More natives have come in, and some of the others gone out to hunt.

"*Tuesday, June* 13. Working hard all day clearing scrub from the banks of the lagoon with Mr. Millar, Mr. Gribble, and Mr. Williams. Sunk a temporary well about four feet six inches with a tomahawk, tin plate, and frying-pan, to such straits are we reduced for tools. A horse-yard enclosing about half an acre has also been made, and the beginning of a garden. In the afternoon a little drizzling rain, and weather turned cold. No news of boat.

"*Wednesday, June* 14. Clearing scrub in morning. In afternoon went with Mr. Millar along the lagoon for about two miles. Chose fine garden site, and a bend in the water will make a fine horse-paddock of about two acres with only 450 yards of fencing. It is about

a mile from the station. In the evening saw the Koko Myndyuno corroboree at the camp. These people sing regular tunes, and have several unusual pantomimes. In one, the performers all lay down in a half-circle, feet inwards, while the fugleman beat time on a drum made of a bent root, and a second man went round and fanned them with a turkey's wing, while they sang and beat time with their feet. Then the same thing was repeated sitting, kneeling on one knee, and standing. Then one man knelt on both knees in the centre with his hands apparently tied behind his back, while another held and pulled tight an imaginary rope while the chorus danced and sung. Then there was dead silence and the kneeling man suddenly cried 'Ha ha ha!' and threw his head on one side as if his neck were dislocated. Then the scene was formed again, but this time the man behind stood in a throwing attitude and the man in front held a long spear so that it seemed to pass through the small of his back and repeated the 'Ha ha ha!' performance. Then they all cried 'Ha!' and had a final dance.

"*Thursday, June* 15. Mr. Gribble and Mr. Millar, with Bendigo, went off early to the South Mitchell, I clearing scrub and writing letters and telegrams for the mail, which we take to Rutland Plains to-morrow. Went the hospital rounds with Mr. Williams. Many very sad cases; much improvement in some instances, but we have no carbolic left and only a little boracic acid and permanganate; we miss the stores greatly, and our diet is Spartan in its simplicity except when we get game. To-day James went out shooting and returned with two ducks, two geese, and a turkey, weighing between them 30 lb. In the afternoon Mr. Field and I, accompanied by the four schoolboys, walked out to a curious blacks' wet-season camp on a platform of sticks, and I photographed it. At dusk Mr. Millar and Bendigo returned from the South Mitchell with the good news that

Mr. Gribble, ascending the look-out at the last moment before starting back, had sighted through the glass a tiny sail to the north. He determined to stay the night, and sent back his horse. I am going down to the coast in the morning.

"*Friday, June* 16. A heavy day. I left at 8 A.M. and rode down ten miles to the mouth of Trubanaman Creek, expecting to find the boat, but, alas, no sign of it. Then I rode eleven miles along the beach to the South Mitchell, where I found Mr. Gribble camped without a coat or rug and hardly any food. He told me that the boat had been clearly seen off the Main Mitchell yesterday, from 3 to 6 P.M., tacking about. He had kept up a big fire, but in the morning the boat had disappeared. I gave him my oilskin and a piece of damper which I had, and set off for home, distant about fifteen miles, to try to get a boy off in time to send a telegram to Normanton by the mail from Rutland Plains. Not very easy finding one's way alone on these big plains with their occasional scrubs, but got in at 5.30 P.M., having ridden thirty-six miles with only one drink of muddy water. I cannot understand the boat coming so far and no farther on the South Mitchell. We are only eight miles from the Main Mitchell, but it is impossible to get there.

"*Saturday, June* 17. Got Bendigo off with pack-horses to Rutland Plains to borrow some flour. Sent off Ernie with some provisions for Mr. Gribble, with a boy to guide him. Confess to some slight depression at our continued ill-fortune with the boat, but reflected that we had done all that lay in our power and that God often orders things for our good differently from what we expect and think right. Worked at clearing scrub on the bank of the lagoon all the morning. It is cheering to look up from any point and see our Mission flag flying with its white cross reminding us of the aim and purpose of the whole thing. Everything works smoothly and

well, the different duties being well divided and apportioned. Mr. Gribble returned about 6.30 P.M. and reported no signs of boat. About 8 P.M. Bendigo returned. The mailman had left, but Mr. Bowman most kindly rode on to Lochnagar hoping to catch him there. Mr. Bowman most kind in lending flour, etc. Got Croydon paper of June 1, with full account of the fate of the Baltic Fleet.

"*Sunday, June* 18. Had our Trinity Sunday celebration at 7.30 A.M., with fresh lilies from the lagoon on our little altar. Just as we were finishing breakfast a fearful din broke out in the camp, and James Noble ran over followed by the rest of us. We were just in time to prevent a fight which was beginning between two tribes over rights of hunting. The protagonists were Urdell the giant and a Koko Widdee man. Both were furiously angry, and we had to stay some time for the tumult to subside. I took Morning Prayer and Mr. Gribble Evening.

"*Monday, June* 19. Mr. Williams and Bendigo went out to South Mitchell to relieve Grady, who returned in the evening with no news of the boat. We spent the day making a garden and putting in seeds. All the digging had to be done with a tomahawk, as the picks and spades were on the boat. Our four schoolboys are improving, and are bright little lads, full of fun. More want to come, but we cannot take them till the supplies arrive.

"*Tuesday, June* 20. Working all day clearing scrub. In the evening it threatened rain, and the blacks began bringing in palm-leaves to shelter under. I have now got the correct names of our four resident schoolboys. They are Boendoangadolin, Lenga, Boengabadu, and Mengadolin. They are rapidly acquiring some idea of order and discipline.

"Here are the words of a favourite corroboree song, sung over and over again about two hundred times:

Denna Wapomi
Yetta Molliburra
Dabonaï nai ai mai mai.

I cannot discover that they have any meaning.

"*Wednesday, June* 21. Clearing scrub. Our first act of discipline. Mengadolin was detected in an act of petty larceny and formally sent back to the camp. He wept copiously.

"*Thursday, June* 22. Left the station with Grady at 8.45 A.M. to relieve Mr. Williams, who, with Bendigo, has been watching for the last three days at the mouth of the Mitchell. Found that Mr. W. had been spending his time making a spacious house of saplings and green boughs. Very comfortable and homely after our former desolate camps here. Soon after Mr. W. left for the station eighteen Koko Myndyunos appeared, considerately leaving their spears outside the camp. I had a talk with them as well as one can talk without understanding each other's tongue, and gathered that they intended to camp for the night with us. It is pleasing to think that the Mission has already rendered it possible for a single white man to camp in safety among these wild people.

"Still they are very suspicious. I had a long talk with them in the afternoon and they were all sitting down when I suddenly got up and went into the house to get a piece of paper to draw on for them. Two or three immediately jumped up and ran for their lives, thinking I had gone for a revolver. When I reappeared with the paper, the rest, who had not moved, though I think a little apprehensive, greeted the runaways with shouts of laughter. About 5 P.M. they went off to their own camp for the night. Cut down some trees that obstructed somewhat the view of our high flagstaff.

"*Friday, June* 23. This place is now provided with flies, mosquitoes, and sand-flies; there were none of

these things when we came here a fortnight ago. I suppose they are among the blessings of civilization. Very high tides yesterday and to-day. Life is not exciting here. Grady has gone to see if he can catch some fish for dinner. I forgot to bring a candle, and as it is dark at 7 P.M. and not light till 7 A.M. there is plenty of time for sleep. This I should say was an ideal place for a man suffering from brain-fag.

"*Saturday, June* 24. Nothing much to record. I made some johnny-cakes this morning, and that sums up my personal exertions for twenty-four hours. Grady caught some fish, and that sums up his. Inclined to doubt the sweetness of *far niente.*

"After tea Grady brought news that there was a very big alligator in the river. I went and had a look at him. He was on the opposite bank, and I fired at him, but the distance was too great. He did not even move for two or three minutes, and then slid into the river and watched us lazily with his head out.

"*Sunday, June* 25. The last morning of exile. There has been a strong south wind the last two days, and the sea has been rough for the first time. The highest tide was on the morning of the 22nd, five days after full moon. There is only one tide here in the twenty-four hours. Mr. Millar, who came to relieve me, did not turn up till nearly 3 P.M., and told me that they had run out of flour, and Mr. Gribble had gone into Rutland Plains to borrow some more, and he only had a damper for himself and the boy until we could send him some more. Grady and I came home fast and got in soon after 6 P.M. This constant difficulty of supplies is very harassing. Half our time is taken up in hunting up horses and sending hither and thither to supply people for a day or two with food. The exclusive diet of meat and bread for so long is beginning to affect our health somewhat.

"After tea we went over to the camp and I held

service. Fully two hundred were ranged in a compact semicircle awaiting us. They were very quiet and attentive. We sang some hymns and chants, and I spoke to them through Grady.

"*Monday, June* 26. In the morning we marked out a rectangular space, with a frontage of 212 feet to the lagoon and a depth of 270 feet, as a Mission compound, on which to align the permanent buildings. Had a number of natives clearing the grass. All very anxious to work. In the evening a number of the Koko Wangara arrived (Bendigo's tribe). I went and had a talk with them. Their country is some way up the river, and many of them speak English (of a sort). I took the schoolboys this afternoon, and find they are making good progress. Ernest came in with a 50 lb. bag of flour (which, alas, only lasts us four days), some meat, and a little sugar and jam, so that we fared sumptuously.

"*Tuesday, June* 27. In the morning I rode down the south bank of the Trubanaman Creek towards the sea, to inspect it, with a view to judging the length of the windings. Mr. Gribble returned from Rutland Plains. At night news brought in that the boat had returned to the Main Mitchell yesterday, and was anchored there.

"*Wednesday, June* 28. Mr. Gribble and I rode out to the South Mitchell, and found report of the boat's appearance to be false. We waited till 4 P.M., and travelling fast got back to the station at 7 P.M., after disappointing day.

"*Thursday, June* 29, *St. Peter's Day.* A number of Koko Myndyuno from the islands at the mouth of the Mitchell arrived, both men and women. Fancy it was from their story of the boat, which they saw a fortnight ago, that the story of its second visit came. These women are all strong and healthy—a great contrast to the tribes nearer to the white settlements. Mr. Gribble and I, with three boys, fenced in a bend of the creek to serve as a small paddock. Mr. Millar met with

a nasty accident to his shoulder from a falling log a few days ago. It is getting better, but slowly.

"*Friday, June* 30. In the morning rode down to the landing-place at the head of the salt-water navigation, and fixed up a notice board with "Mission 3 miles E." on it, pointing to the blazed track. The distance is not more than two and a half miles. In the afternoon I rode up Trubanaman. Found that it is a creek, not a lagoon; followed it up for about seven miles above the station; still plenty of water. I think that it must come out of Magnificent Creek; probably it is one of its mouths, and Topsy Creek another.

"*Saturday, July* 1. We had no bread to-day until 2 P.M., when the boys brought in some flour from Mr. Bowman's. I started at 2.30 P.M. to take some on to Mr. Millar at the South Mitchell. Stayed the night there.

"*Sunday, July* 2. Left Mitchell after an early morning service, and got back to the station for dinner. In the afternoon walked with Mr. Williams round the head of the freshwater, and down the opposite bank as far as the station. Finding it too far to go back, we swam across. On the way we passed a number of platforms five to six feet above the ground, on which the natives sleep in the wet season Much talk about the Mission, for which there is little time during the week. The words of the Gospel for the day so appropriate to our work: "Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in." At night had service at the camp for Bendigo's tribe, the Koko Wangara, who are going back to their own country to-morrow. They were very attentive, and Bendigo interpreted very quickly and, apparently, well.

"*Monday, July* 3. Mr. Gribble and I left the station at 1.15 P.M. and spent a couple of hours or more horse-hunting; then we followed down Topsy Creek, and after some difficulty found the place where it joins the Tru-

SCHOOL GIRLS AND BOYS OF THE MITCHELL RIVER MISSION

A GARDEN ON THE MITCHELL RIVER MISSION

banaman Creek, here a broad river. We returned from here straight to the Mission, and found the distance only five miles due east. By landing here, eight miles of windings could be saved up to the landing-place we had fixed on three miles below the Mission. I do not think that the junction can be more than two miles from the sea. Topsy Creek runs in at right angles, and is a much smaller stream.

"*Tuesday, July* 4. Mr. Gribble, James, and I set off for the South Mitchell after breakfast, to relieve Mr. Field in his watch. About half-way we met a boy bringing a letter to say that the boat was in sight. Mr. Gribble and James went back to muster horses, and I pushed on for the beach. It was a case of more haste less speed, for I got tangled up in the scrub and lost half an hour extricating myself. When I reached the beach I saw a boat two or three miles south of Trubanaman, so I concluded that she must have been in and taken Mr. Field on board. This I found to be the case from Grady, whom I met soon after, walking down the beach. I could see that it was not the *Minnie*, and from Grady found it was the *Melbidir*. I rode a mile or two south, and seeing that the wind was failing I made a smoke signal, and the vessel anchored and sent a boat on shore. I immediately sent Grady off with my horse to tell Mr. Gribble, and went on board, to learn to my great distress that nothing had been heard of the *Minnie* or her crew. Anxiety having been aroused, the Government Resident had kindly arranged to dispatch the *Melbidir* to make inquiries, and just before she sailed my telegram arrived from Normanton. She had also on board a few hundredweight of provisions, and some much needed tools. So quickly did Grady go in, and Mr. Gribble travel out, that he was down with pack-horses soon after dark, but not seeing him we did not land till next morning. Captain Schluter had carefully searched the whole coast on his way down, so he deter-

mined to lose no time, but to go straight for Mapoon to inform Mr. Hey of the fruitless result of his search. I determined to accompany him, to make sure of the dispatch of another boat, if, as we fear, the *Minnie* has been lost, and I brought Mr. Field to accompany the boat back, and make sure of its finding the Mission. After a hurried interview we went on board, and set sail for the north at 9.30 A.M. on Wednesday, July 5. I felt very sad at leaving without farewell the Mission and the people among whom I had spent five weeks, so happy but for the anxiety about the boat.

"*Thursday, July* 6. We reached Pera Head about 5 P.M., and met the *John Ward*, with Mr. Richter on board. From him we learnt the welcome news that the lost cutter was at Mapoon. Anchored about 10 P.M. off Duyfhen Point.

"*Friday, July* 7. Under way about 7 A.M., with a fresh breeze, and reached Mapoon at 4 P.M. Found the *Minnie* at anchor. Bob had apparently mistaken the Coleman for the North Mitchell. He had returned from the Main Mitchell to the Archer, being short of water, and then gone down again, but not far enough. Mr. Hey most kind in giving every assistance. Sailed again at 3 A.M. Rough sea and head winds all the afternoon. Anchored off Friday Island at 10 P.M.

"*Sunday, July* 9. We waited till the tide turned, and reached Thursday Island about 11 A.M."

CHAPTER XII

THE ROPER RIVER (1907)

In the year 1907 I left Thursday Island with the Rev. A. R. Ebbs, secretary of the Church Missionary Association of Victoria, in our Mission ship the *Francis Pritt*, to see if we could find a site for a Mission station on the Roper River, which enters the Gulf of Carpentaria on its western side. We left on Saturday morning, June 15. The weather was extraordinarily calm for the time of the year. There was hardly any wind, and we drifted out with the tide so slowly that it was nearly 10 P.M. before we had passed Booby Island. Then we met with a heavy swell from the south-west and a breeze from the south-east, causing a nasty lumpy sea which continued all night and next day; but after breakfast we managed to hold service on deck for the crew, though it cannot be honestly said that the singing was a great success.

I continue with entries from my diary:

"7.30 P.M., *June* 18. Off Chasm Island on the north-west coast Groote Island. This is the first instant that I have been able to write, or indeed think, very connectedly since Saturday morning, and I must explain how we come to be anchored here under Chasm Island instead of being on our way to the mouth of the Roper, a hundred miles to the south. By about midday on Sunday the sea was very high though the wind was not high enough to account for it. On Monday morning the wind increased to a gale and the seas became mountainous, but the *Pritt* behaved

splendidly after being closely reefed down, and ran 125 miles from midday on Sunday to midday on Monday. The weather was too bad to take observations, and the wind so violent that it was probable that with our shortened sail we should be unable to make our destination, so I suggested to Captain Noelke that he should make for the north end of Groote Island, some thirty miles north of our course, where we might possibly find shelter from the fierce south-easterly, which was making even some of the crew sea-sick and reducing the passengers to a state of mental chaos. I was well enough to sit from time to time by the steersman and watch the skill with which he met the huge walls of water that came rushing up, towering above us and apparently bent on destroying us, though under the skilled hand the *Pritt* climbed a mountain here and dived through a valley there, always eluding the full shock till one came to have almost a contempt for the ease with which the puny skill of man baffled their efforts. Yet some of them were cunning too. Now they would seem to pass by and then suddenly shoot up a deluge of water drenching the usually only dry spot over the stern, now jumping up unseen under the bows and smothering the vessel in spray. But it was too wet to stay much on deck, and the cabin had to be closely fastened down with a tarpaulin over skylight and hatch, so that it may be imagined that three days of stifling heat and darkness, even with an occasional excursion to the raging deck, did not tend to raise the spirits. The barometer went up to 30·21 and stayed there steadily. In fact it is there still, to the confusion of other unhappy travellers in the Gulf; for a high barometer means a southerly gale. Monday was a terrible night. Sea after sea broke over the ship, for it is more difficult to avoid them at night, and the wind howled with a perfect frenzy. At dawn the captain said that something must go, even with our closely reefed sails, and so took in our big sail

altogether. The gale grew worse and worse. No sights at all could be taken, and though the log said we had run 142 miles it seemed incredible, reefed down and shortened as we had been. The wind and sea grew worse and worse. We did not know where we were. Melancholy sat on the faces of the crew, some of whom were still sea-sick and none quite sure what was going to happen, as the captain said that at dark there would be nothing for it but to beat out again from the supposed direction of the land into what promised to be a yet wilder night than the last. Mr. Ebbs and I had a little meeting for prayer for divine guidance, and he had just come up for his first visit of recovery to the deck, and was sitting perched with me at the stern about four o'clock when he called my attention to two sea-birds. I called John Wesley's attention to them and he looked keenly about, and a few moments later pointed out a little island about eight miles to the south-west, an outlier of Groote Island. It was a critical moment, only a couple of hours to dark, and an anchorage to be found in a raging gale.

"Captain Noelke was equal to the occasion, and up went the foresail again, and we simply flew along as close hauled as we could be to the wind at the rate of at least nine or ten knots. It was a close shave, as there was no possibility of anchoring under the first part of the island that we came to, and we had to go some twenty miles from where we first sighted land before the captain found, in the dark, a sheltered spot in fifteen fathoms of water, close in under Chasm Island, over which we heard the wind howling in baffled rage. No one had had much to eat since leaving Booby Island, and the first question was, 'What shall we have for tea?' and it was unanimously decided in favour of fried onions and sausages! I felt proud of the *Francis Pritt*, and thankful to Almighty God Who had brought us safely from the storm to the haven, for the gale was so fierce that, unable to carry sail, we might have been blown away to

the northward, with no harbours of refuge, had we not just sighted the island in the nick of time. I did not forget how many had been praying for protection and direction for us. It should be mentioned for future guidance that one should not again take the course we took, as it involves too great danger of being blown north by a gale. One ought rather to go down the Queensland coast sufficiently to get a safe slant of wind, and then in any gale refuge could be sought under Maria Island or, if that were missed, under Groote Island, with certainty of making it. I think every one on board, even John Wesley's little puppy dog shut up in the after hatch, was as glad to get into safety as we were.

"Next morning, 19th, it was blowing as hard as ever, making rough water even under the shelter of the island. We got up anchor about 7 A.M., and stood south-east by Winchelsea Island, almost to Connection Island, from which we ran back on the other tack, and anchored at noon in four-fathom water and well sheltered under North-West Bluff, the north-west point of Groote Island. A reef runs out about half a mile to the west of the Bluff, which is a fine mass of cliff rising sheer out of the water. After dinner I landed with Mr. Ebbs, John, and Jimmy. We walked a mile along the beach to the west, saw a few tracks of natives and one recent fire. We then struck inland through some thick scrub interspersed with open forest towards the foot of the hill, but could only get through with difficulty. I searched well for water, but could only find one small spring, almost dry, just through the scrub to the right of the Bluff, but the ground was damp in many places. I left some flour and tobacco under a large rock, and after a delightful bathe in the sea we returned on board about 4.30 P.M., bringing with us, alas, a large consignment of flies. The barometer showed little sign of improvement, and we were glad to be in retirement. Even in this sheltered spot while we were ashore our large new

enamel washing-basin was caught up by the wind and whirled overboard before it could be saved. We had a quiet night, and sailed at 9.30 A.M. the following morning.

"*June* 20. Running between Connection Island and Groote Island. Though the barometer was still very high, 30·22, the wind had much moderated, and we were able to set all sail again for the first time. As we ran down the coast we noticed several signal fires. The wind was contrary, and we had to beat all the way against a fresh breeze. There is a good channel with eight fathoms of water between Connection and Groote Island. The west coast of the island is low with a sandy foreshore and low wooded ranges behind. It seems to be rather poor country. At the south-western corner of the island a peninsula of low sandy hills runs out about four miles to the westward, and under it we found excellent anchorage in four-fathom water with soft bottom about half a mile from shore and about three miles to the north-east of a little round islet off the point of the peninsula. We saw several natives on shore, and two came off in a fine dug-out canoe which they propelled with powerful strokes. They were large, well-made men in splendid condition, but understood no word of English except the magic word 'Tabak.' We found from John Wesley, who includes some knowledge of Malay among his accomplishments, that the few words they used were Malay. They asked for rice in Malay, and we gave them some. I gave them some tobacco and flour, and then motioned to them to cast off the line we had thrown them as they were in danger of swamping. Soon after we anchored, a little after sunset and too late to go ashore. I noticed in the canoe only shell bailers and a flat stone containing a few burning sticks. This is a splendid refuge in southerly or easterly weather, being completely sheltered and with plenty of water. It is about sixty miles north-east of the Roper River mouth.

"*June* 21. After breakfast I landed with Mr. Ebbs,

John Wesley, and Sam. Three natives came out in the canoe, but seeing us prepare to start, made for the shore and landed before us. Where we landed there was a high sand-ridge above the beach, then a hollow, and then a higher ridge. A number of natives showed on the ridge, watching us uneasily. They wear a string round the waist with a small bunch of threads about nine inches long. I left the rest of the party with the boat and walked towards the ridge. One man waited for me, but the others disappeared over the ridge. We walked up to the top of the first ridge and saw that the rest had retreated to the second ridge. When my companion saw this, and that the rest of our party were advancing from the boat his courage failed him, and to my great regret they all ran for their lives. We followed along the sand-ridges for about a mile to the east, finding many tracks of natives, to a large clump of shea-oaks on the beach, where we found fish-spears with a double wooden prong with carved wooden barbs, and several home-made fishing-lines; the only hook we saw had been made out of a large nail. Between the shea-oaks and the sea was a hole in the sand about two feet deep, just above high-water mark, containing fresh water. About a quarter of a mile inland we found the main camp, which had contained probably about forty persons. We found a neatly tied up parcel of opossum fur, a dilly-bag with two wooden knitting-needles, round which the work was neatly twisted, some feather and string ornaments, and several throwing-sticks. These latter are simply a short round stick with a peg for the spear, very inferior to the elaborate woomeras of the western coast of the Gulf. We found some Malay calico and three gin bottles marked 'Rotterdam.' I left tobacco, a bag of flour, some fish-hooks, and knives. A little way inland we found swampy country with pandanus-trees, the ground being soft and damp though we did not actually see any water. On our return to the place we had

landed at we thoroughly enjoyed a bathe after our long tramp over the sandhills, for we went some way inland to get a better view. Before going off we had a closer look at the canoe. It was cut out of a single tree and was nineteen feet in length, with a freeboard of nine inches, rising sharply at prow and stern to eighteen inches, the stern being about four inches across; altogether a very serviceable boat. I brought away one of the three paddles, leaving a couple of knives and some fish-hooks in return. It was four feet six inches in length, with a long blade like an ordinary oar. We got back on board about noon, quite ready for dinner. In the afternoon the barometer for the first time showed symptoms of a fall. After tea the dinghy was got in and securely lashed down on deck in anticipation of a rough day to-morrow, and when Mr. Ebbs and I came on deck, about half-past seven, after saying Evensong, the captain said that the blacks were hanging round in the canoe again. I got the glasses and soon saw that she was empty and drifting and would soon be lost in the darkness. Orders were given to secure her, and in a few moments the dinghy was unlashed and got overboard, and the wandering canoe captured, taken ashore, and left well up on the beach, though the men found it a heavy job to carry her up. I was most thankful that she drifted so comparatively close to us and that she was seen, as the natives would have thought that we had taken or destroyed her.

"*June* 22. Sailed at 6 A.M. Wind and sea fresh. Sighted Maria Island, which is very high, at 12.30 P.M., and anchored close up under the land in two-fathom water at 4 P.M. Mr. Ebbs and I landed with one of the boys and shot a couple of plover. The island is covered with low bush and is about five miles long. We walked some distance along the beach and found a fine bay about two miles to the south-west. There seemed to be nothing on the island except birds, and

they evidently saw few visitors. We had some difficulty in finding the bar of the river, which is almost out of sight of land, but did so finally.

"*June* 24. After a quiet night we woke to a light breeze and calm sea, and started at 6 A.M. Sailed slowly over the bar, on which we had nine feet of water, but there cannot be much over five feet at low-water spring tides. At the first beacon we had twelve feet, increasing farther in to eighteen feet and twenty feet. As we got to the mouth of the river the breeze almost died away, and for about an hour we had to tow the ship with the dinghy to give her steerage way, but after that a good breeze sprang up and we ran quickly up the river for twenty miles to a point where there is a small piece of bank about ten feet high. Here we found Mr. Macaulay, the police officer at the Roper, awaiting us in his boat. He had been five days coming down the seventy miles of river from the station, as they could only make progress when wind and tide were suitable. He had three aboriginals with him, one being Bob the Pilot, son of Old Bob the Pilot. We welcomed him warmly and, waiting till he got his things packed, took his boat in tow, and continued our progress up the river for another twelve miles, when, about 4.30 P.M., we noticed some natives on the north bank and anchored. Mr. Ebbs, Mr. Macaulay, and I went ashore, and found Old Bob the Pilot and a small camp of natives, to whom I presented a bag of flour and some tobacco, pointing out our Mission flag and telling them that it would return next year. I tried to explain the nature of the proposed Mission, but it was hard to get them to understand. We walked about a mile to look at the camp, a very primitive sort of affair. On the way Old Bob, who is intelligent and speaks fairly good English, tried hard to comprehend my business. Was I taking tucker for the police? Or for the station? Or was I looking for the copper stone? I told him I had simply come to see him

and other blackfellows. He smiled incredulously, and I fear did not take in very much of my attempted explanation of the *raison d'être* of Christian missions. However, he gratefully accepted an offer of medicine for his inflamed eyes, and promised us store of crabs and mudfish for the morrow. We returned on board for tea, and felt much thankfulness that the first stage of our journey had been so successfully accomplished.

"*June* 25. A day of very slow progression. The river winds constantly in every direction, and we were over nine hours in creeping up about eighteen miles. We anchored at 7.30 P.M., soon after passing Harold's Bluff, near a little round island. Bob the Pilot was of great service to us in pointing out dangers. All the country up to this point is very poor, being flats liable to flood and with little water. At our anchorage here the water in the river is quite fresh. From what I learn from Mr. Macaulay much harm has been, and is being, done the natives by the Malay proas which visit the coast during the north-west season. They come without reporting anywhere, carry off the native women and supply the men with drink.

"*June* 26. Got under way early and ran over some very shallow flats. The water is quite fresh and the mangroves have been replaced by a great variety of trees. We kept going till 8 P.M., but only accomplished some twenty-five miles in all.

"*June* 27. Started at 6 A.M. towing the ship. Passed a very dangerous rocky corner just below wreck of *Young Australian*. The channel is narrow and the tide sweeps into a bight full of snags, which we with difficulty cleared by a few yards. It is far the worst place we have found on the river. The *Young Australian* was wrecked on a rock about three-quarters of a mile above here, some thirty years ago. Only the boiler and ironwork of the paddle-wheels now remain. We have just had a great excitement. The captain, who

was steering, happened to look up at the main boom just over his head and saw a large tiger-snake making its way along it. There was a rush for marline-spikes and hammers, and with some difficulty the brute was killed. It must have come up the anchor-chain or the tow-rope of the dinghy in the night and ensconced itself in the furled sail. The sail had been loosed about half an hour previously, and it is most providential that no one was bitten. Fortunately the wind kept just strong enough to enable us to stem the tide, and the narrowing river, with snags all along each bank, required all the captain's skill in steering. About 4 P.M. we reached the bar of rocks which prevents further progress. It is not visible, and the river is only about a hundred feet wide at this point. Here Mr. Macaulay left us for the police station, which is four miles farther up the river, and I went ashore and shot a few parrots and a pigeon for our larder. It has taken us four days to come up from the bar outside the mouth, and I do not think that a sailing vessel can do it in much less time. It will probably take double that time to get down, but the captain is to do the worst part of this while we are away, and we are to ride down forty miles after him, as we wish him to take his own time in negotiating the dangerous places on the upper reaches.

"*June* 28. Before breakfast I went ashore and got from the natives a few spears with well-made quartzite heads. These heads come from the ranges to the W.S.W. After breakfast Mr. Ebbs and I rowed up the river about four miles to the police station, which is situated on the south bank just below a rocky bar which entirely blocks the river at this point and marks the end of tidal waters. Mr. Macaulay welcomed us, the other constable being away. The station boasts a small garden and a flock of about two hundred goats. After landing our goods we sent the boat back to the ship; and in the evening Mr. Macaulay kindly sent down a couple of goats. We found that unfortunately owing to the absence of men and horses

it would be impossible to make a start on the following day, which was rather a disappointment.

"*June* 30. We did not start till 10.30 A.M., and so had time for service first. We crossed the river and went north-east to Knucky's Bluff on the Wilton. From here we followed the Wilton north for about eight miles, camping for dinner at the crossing. After dinner we crossed and travelled E.N.E. and N. over flat country, the first part of which was well watered. About dark we came to a creek where we intended to camp, but there was no water, and we went on for an hour and a half in the dark without coming to any sign of water. It was difficult work keeping the horses together in the dark, and the black boy who was supposed to be guiding us confessed that he had no idea of the way or where water was. There seemed every prospect of having to camp without it, when, changing our direction for about half a mile to the north, we blundered right on a small lagoon, to our infinite satisfaction. We got tea about 8 P.M., and afterwards said Evensong with difficulty by the light of pieces of burning bark. While we were riding along without any apparent prospect of finding water, I could not help re-echoing the hymn that so many congregations were, I knew, singing at that moment: "Lead, kindly Light"; and we were led.

"*July* 1. A very hard rough day. We got off at 9 A.M., and till 1 P.M. travelled down a well-watered creek running south-east. Finding we were far too much to the south we crossed the creek and struck north over the ranges. After a while we found a very old pad, supposed to be the old track from Lake Costello ten years ago to the Roper River at Rennie's Lagoon. Very rough travelling over the ranges, then down on to another creek, with narrow belt of fair grass alongside it. Ran it up for several miles, and camped 5 P.M. Distance about thirty miles, and as we did not stop for food or water we were rather tired, but refreshed by a bathe

in the creek. Not a very good night, too tired to sleep very well.

"*July* 2. Left 8 A.M. Travelled north, four or five miles, up very rough ranges, with fine permanent pools of water but little grass. Splendid country for blacks, of whom we saw many traces, but did not see any. Either they kept out of sight or were all away, as they were reported to be at a great corroboree on the Wilton. At last our road was blocked by an enormous mass of rock. We tried another, and it came to a precipice. Evidently there was no thoroughfare for horses, and it was clear that the old station could not be among the ranges, so I told Mr. Macaulay that, as the next certain thing ahead was the northern coast of Australia, I thought we had better turn back, which we did, having failed to find the old station, which was not astonishing as nothing is left but a few stones which once made a chimney, and a few posts, if not eaten by white ants. There are little patches of scrub in the ranges, plenty of mussels, fish, flying foxes, birds, etc., but absolutely no cattle country for more than a very few head of stock here and there. The only merit of the country is that it is well watered, with large permanent holes. We turned back about 9.15 A.M., and retraced our path over the weary ranges, getting clear of them, by travelling as fast as possible, about 1 P.M., when we thankfully camped for dinner on a creek. We made a short stage in the afternoon, and camped at 4.15 P.M. for fear of finding no water after leaving the creek. Night pleasant and not too cold.

"*July* 3. Started about 8 A.M. After a while I noticed that Tom, the black trooper who was supposed to be our guide, was travelling steadily south mile after mile, making apparently for the end of a range in the far distance. I thought it strange, and called Mr. Ebbs's attention to the fact, for I knew that our proper course back lay only a little to the south of west. About half an hour later I was not surprised to see him stop and

admit that he was completely bushed. Mr. Macaulay now took the lead and changed the course to due west, and for three hours we made our way through thick scrubby country, which made travelling very difficult and view of any kind impossible, while there was considerable risk of losing the pack-horses. This country is utterly useless for any purpose. We were fortunately able to find a low place to cross the range, and gradually descending through the same dense dry country we came out on the Wilton about 1 P.M., and camped on a magnificent water-hole for dinner, very glad to have at length got clear of our difficulties. We crossed the Wilton, running it down nearly to the junction with the Roper, and got back to the police station. We saw plenty of old fires and signs of blacks, but not one could be seen. Mr. Macaulay says that he thinks they suspect us of an intention to arrest them for cattle killing, and take them in the *Francis Pritt* to Port Darwin. Of course in such rough country it would be impossible to see them if they did not want to be seen. Mr. Macaulay has been most courteous and obliging in helping us in every way. We must have travelled well over a hundred miles in the four days, and for the most part over different country going and returning.

"*July* 4. I was very glad of a day's rest from riding, but had a busy day. I had asked Mr. R., the manager of Hodgson Downs, about fifty miles distant to the south, to come over and see me, and soon after breakfast he arrived with Mrs. R., their little boy, and a cavalcade of four stockmen, twelve black boys, and the wives of four of them, and over a hundred horses, all, except Mr. and Mrs. R., on their way to remove the last of the cattle from the Arafura station.

"Mrs. R. has probably one of the most isolated homes of any white women in Australia. We were very glad to see them, and took a number of photographs of the outfit, which is to be absent for six months. Mr. R. gave us a

great deal of useful information and advice on the subject of the proposed Mission station. The blacks he had were splendidly made men, and all most smart and clean. In the evening we had service, which was attended by eight whites and sixteen civilized blacks, a record gathering for the Roper River. We had a very hearty service, though the singing left something to be desired. Mr. R.'s small son, who speaks chiefly blackfellow language, took much interest in the preparations for service, and confided to his mother, 'I think that fellow-man make big corroboree to-night.' We had hoped to start for the boat to-morrow morning, but to our disappointment some of the necessary horses cannot be found, and we shall have to wait with what patience we may.

"*July* 5. Got some writing done in the morning. In the afternoon I walked a mile or two up the river. Scenery very pretty—large trees and fine stretches of water.

"*July* 6. Left the station at 10 A.M., and at four miles crossed the Wilton just above tidal water. Down the north bank of the Roper River through eight miles of very poor country. Another four miles of rather better country brought us to a fine lagoon known as Yalwarra or Rennie's Lagoon. A crescent-shaped lake over two miles long runs round the base of some low hills and is covered with beautiful white lilies. It is about half a mile from the river, and the land between is high above flood mark, level, and well grassed, and would make a fine site for a house. After lunch we followed on down the river for another four miles, past a second fine lagoon, and soon after we caught sight of Mount St. George, four miles off. This is a table mountain, about three miles in length and six hundred feet high, with steep red bastion-like cliffs. The approach to the mountain through an open park-like country (but with poor, coarse grass) is very beautiful, and at the foot of the cliffs is an encircling

lake, on which we camped for the night about sunset, having travelled about twenty-four miles.

"*July* 7. Left camp about 8 A.M. Very poor country for about four miles, the ranges coming in closely to the river, then the country opened out a little, and we passed several swamps and lagoons, but these all become salt at the end of a dry season, Mount St. George being the lowest permanent water on this side of the river—that is, over sixty miles from the sea. The lowest permanent water on the south bank is about ten miles farther down. At Yan Merri, about fourteen miles from Mount St. George, we passed a large swamp, the lowest fresh water on the river, but not really permanent. Here we found a small native village with grass mosquito-proof huts, and saw some natives who told us that the boat was about two miles farther down the river, where on arrival about 1 P.M. we found she had been waiting three days, having experienced great difficulty in getting over the flats off Garden Island even at high water. The crew had been luxuriating in ducks, and we found a plentiful supply for dinner.

"The tide turned about 3 P.M., so we said good-bye to Mr. Macaulay, with many thanks for his most valuable assistance, and set off on our homeward voyage. We made slow progress, and found the river very shallow in places, but by dark we had made eight miles and passed most of the bad corners. We anchored at dusk in fear of snags; after tea we had all the crew in to service, and I told them all about our inquiries and researches on behalf of the Mission, in which they seemed much interested. A number of friends of Bob the Pilot accompanied us for some miles along the bank, headed by Old Bob the Pilot bearing a precious kerosine tin which the captain had presented to him.

"*July* 8. Off soon after 6 A.M. Made about ten miles, and passed the last of the rocks before the tide failed at 10 A.M. Anchored and landed through the thick mangrove

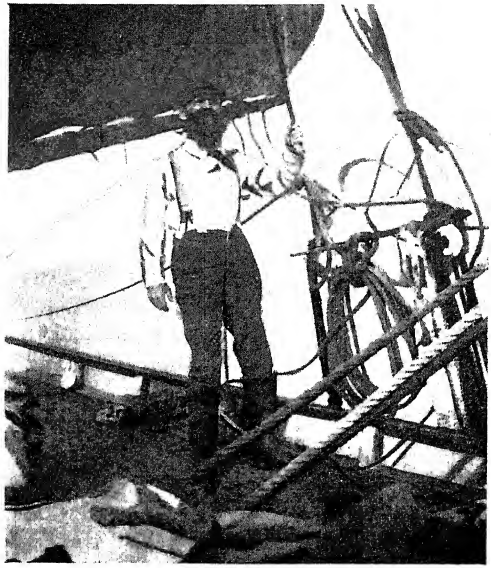
on to big open plain with bare salt pan and patches of grass. Found fresh-water lagoon, but not permanent. Found Old Bob and his tribe, who had crossed the river higher up. Bob inquired as to how many months it would be before we returned, and announced his intention of coming to stay with us when we did.

"I found in the camp two hollow pelican bones carefully stowed away. Bob said that they were to carry poison in 'to mix with tucker of man you not like, all same as white man,' at which proof of high civilization he seemed much amused.

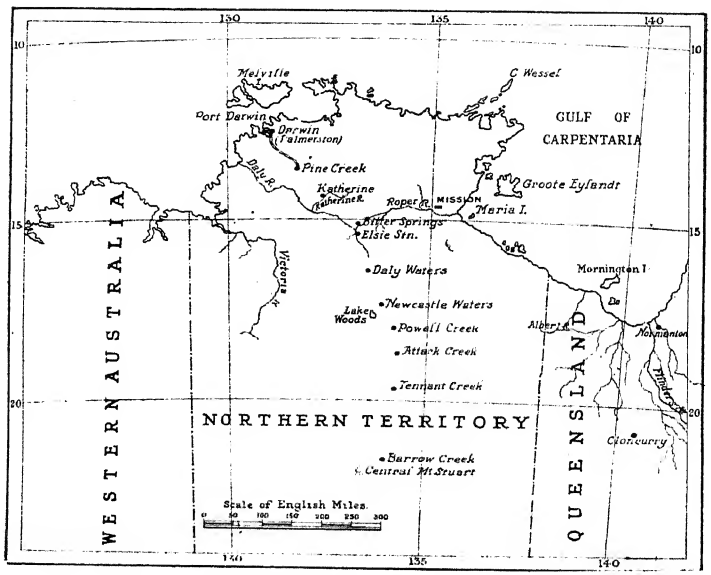
"Here we parted from Young Bob the Pilot, who had grown quite fat during his sojourn on board, and is really a fine-looking man. We are now about twenty-five miles from the mouth of the river.

"*July* 9. Soon after we got under way I shot an alligator on the bank. He gave several kicks and disappeared into the water. We made slow but steady progress, the river being now wide enough to beat, and had just enough light left to make the north head of the river. A dingo came down to the bank and howled at us, the only one we have seen or heard on this trip. The *Pritt* took eight days' actual travelling to descend the river.

"*July* 10. We sailed at 6 A.M., and beat out four miles to the inner side of the bar, but had to anchor in very shallow water as the tide was too low. The wind and sea were violent, and we passed a very unpleasant time, but fortunately had just enough water. At noon we made another start, and spent two hours beating out the two miles across the bar—wind, and sea, and tide all against us. The channel is very narrow, and on one side all, and on the other most of, the beacons are gone, so that everything has to be done by the lead, the water being so thick and muddy that it is impossible to see anything; the water would shoal sometimes a fathom quicker than the lead could be thrown, so it may be



THE BISHOP OF CARPENTARIA, ON BOARD THE "FRANCIS PRITT" IN BAD WEATHER



MAP OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

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imagined that beating out under these circumstances was no joke, and every one heaved a sigh of relief when an extra half-fathom told us that we were well over the bar. It was well we got out when we did, without waiting for the tide to turn, as after we got out it blew harder than ever. The wind was due east, the direction in which we wanted to go, so we made little progress, but beat up as far as Maria Island, which we reached about an hour after dark, anchoring in still water—a great contrast to the continual buffeting of the day. We are looking forward to a rough time crossing, and so hope to make the most of our night's rest. There are various outlying reefs and rocks, which make it unsafe to proceed in the dark, so we can enjoy our quiet night with a clear conscience.

"*July* 15. I summarize the four last melancholy and unprofitable days. We left Maria Island at 7 A.M. on Thursday, and as soon as we got clear of the island ran into a heavy sea, which increased in violence as we got farther from the land. For three days it was impossible to stand, or to cook any proper food, and the deck was constantly swept by the sea. The binnacles broke loose, and we nearly lost both our compasses, and John Wesley with them, overboard. Several seas found their way below, and altogether we had a very miserable time. On Sunday, though the sea was still high, we were able to stay on deck and begin to enjoy life again; and the Monday morning, when we were some thirty miles south-west of Duyfhen Point, all was bright and pleasant again. From here fortune smiled upon us. We passed the Coen River at 6 P.M. and Booby Island at 9 A.M. the following morning, arriving at Thursday Island at 8 P.M., after a long wait for the tide."

CHAPTER XIII

ABORIGINAL LIFE

THE Australian aboriginal is often described as on of the very lowest types of humanity, so much so tha Professor Haeckel declares that he is only "one degre above the anthropoid ape." Those who know th aborigines well are strongly inclined to doubt whethe they are by any means one of the lowest races of men and are quite certain that they do not fall far belov the average standard of uncivilized humanity.

In their only industry, hunting, they show extra ordinary intelligence and develop the most wonderfu powers of observation, and if their weapons are primitive they are at least well suited to their purpose. In one direction at least, music, they show great capacity, and every Mission has its brass band, which can compete on equal terms with any neighbouring band of white performers.

It is not safe to go entirely by head measurements, and an unwillingness to consider all the facts of a problem has vitiated much scientific work.

Some years ago a noted German anthropologist, Professor K., visited the Yarrabah Mission station and asked that the natives might be sent to him in order that he might measure their skulls. He sat accordingly on the veranda with a big pipe and measured the skulls of all who came, and the more he measured the more he shook his head. "Will you not come into the school and examine the children?" said the superintendent. "They have made remarkable progress, and up to the

age of eleven do the same lessons as the children in the white schools." "No," said the Professor; "I do not want to see them. I know that they are incapable of learning anything. I have measured their skulls." "But will you not look at our steam-engine, which is run entirely by two aboriginal boys?" "No," was the reply. "They cannot possibly understand machinery. I have measured their skulls." "But," persisted the superintendent, "will you not at least listen to our band, which is often in requisition when good music is required in Cairns?" "No," was the reply. "It is no good. I have measured their skulls."

The origin of the aborigines is wrapped in mystery, but it is clear that there are two well-marked types which are now thoroughly mixed, each type showing itself in the same tribe.

The older type is that which persisted to our own times in Tasmania, where it was protected from invasion by the Bass Strait, but became rapidly extinct on the coming of the whites. The primitive man was short, dark, and curly-headed, and probably of a lower type of intelligence than the invader, who was lighter in colour, tall, and straight-haired, and who, as some think, may be identified with the aboriginal native of Southern India. These probably spread from island to island, and crossed to Australia, scudding before the north-west monsoon in perhaps such outrigger canoes as those of New Guinea, which will stand a very heavy sea. They seem to have coalesced with the earlier inhabitants, and to this day each tribe in Australia is divided into the dark and the light men, the Crows and the Eagle-hawks, or by whatever other name they are called.

The extraordinarily complex marriage law of the Australian aborigines is apparently based on this distinction, and is probably designed to prevent in-breeding. The list of persons whom an aboriginal may not marry is much longer than, and ten times as com-

plicated as, the Table of Prohibited Degrees in the Prayer Book, and the law was in their natural state enforced under very heavy penalties. It seems difficult to believe that this complexity of law is not a relic of a higher stage of civilization. The same thought is suggested by their language.

The language of each tribe, though more or less on the lines of those of the adjoining tribes, is often very dissimilar in vocabulary, so that it is no uncommon thing for a tribe not to understand at all the language of a tribe forty or fifty miles away. The type may remain the same, but the practice of taboo leads to the constant disuse of common words, so that in a very short time after, say, a tribe has separated into two, their languages will become mutually unintelligible. Here again certain refinements and peculiarities, such as the use of the dual and of a plural including or excluding the person speaking or spoken to, seem to indicate that their speech was once of a higher type.

It is possible to draw the same conclusion from the strange corroborees and initiation ceremonies which have been fully described by Professor Spencer and other authorities. Not only the ritual but the language of these ceremonies has been handed down from the past, though their meaning has in most instances been entirely lost. I have often tried to discover the meaning of a corroboree song, and always in vain. I feel sure that the natives themselves do not now understand them.

The preparations for a corroboree are very elaborate, the men painting their bodies with gypsum and red and yellow ochre, and adorning themselves with feathers and white down stuck on by means of blood.

The dancing begins early in the evening, and is carried on for many hours, sometimes almost till morning. Scenes of hunting, etc., are imitated with an enormous amount of repetition. At times the performers rest and

are fanned with a turkey wing. The corroborees are, however, not all ancient, for a new one will sometimes be invented and will travel from tribe to tribe all over the country. The initiation rites are probably much older than the corroborees and their origin is completely wrapped in mystery. It is impossible to read the elaborate accounts of Professor Spencer and other writers without feeling that they had once a meaning which they no longer possess, and that they represent a higher level of thought and a wider conception of social order than the tribes at present have. Is it possible that their real home is in India, the great mother of mystery? However this may be, there is little doubt that in addition to the strains I have already mentioned, there is also in the northern tribes a large admixture of Malay blood. The Malay proas have been in the habit of visiting North-West Australia and the eastern side of the Gulf of Carpentaria for hundreds of years, and continued to do so until about fifteen years ago, coming over with the first of the north-west monsoon winds and returning about three months later, with the beginning of the south-east monsoon. The northern natives are much taller and finer-made men than those in other parts of Australia. I have, indeed, seen one man named Urdell, on the Mitchell River, who was over seven feet high and well made in proportion. He had a brother who, according to native accounts, was shot by a neighbouring squatter. He was said to have been of equal size. I have also seen a man and his wife from farther east who were of enormous bulk and considerable height, but these are exceptions, the ordinary native being considerably below the average height, though well made and proportioned. The term "black" is a misnomer, for though in the case of semi-civilized tribes dirt often gives it a very dark hue, the ordinary wild aboriginal of the north is of a warm chocolate colour, though very dark skins are occasionally found, being

probably relics of the earlier dark race. In the south of Australia a darker skin appears to predominate, with probably a lower general level of intelligence.

That the aboriginal is incapable of mental and spiritual growth seems to be disproved by the experiences of the Mission stations, where pure-blooded aboriginals have been successfully entrusted with all kinds of work, including the management of out-stations, writing of reports, conduct of services, etc., or by the life and example of such a man as Mr. James Noble, a pure-blooded aboriginal from one of the lowest tribes in the Gulf of Carpentaria, who is respected by all who have known him for the last twenty years, who holds his Bishop's licence as a lay-reader, and whose reading of the service compares favourably with that of many of the clergy. It is disproved also by the example of several men in public employment. One pure-blooded aboriginal has been for many years a draughtsman in the public service of New South Wales. Another has displayed remarkable talent as an inventor, and yet another is a popular sergeant in the Australian Expeditionary Force.

This is the more remarkable when we consider the primitive nature of the aboriginal's life. In the north, at any rate, little cover is needed and the aboriginal lives and sleeps in the open. In this he is not so very different from his white supplanter. Many stockmen live practically the whole year in the open without even a tent, camping at night under a tree and only visiting the station for a day or two at intervals of many weeks.

The wild aboriginals are usually unclothed, though in the colder districts they make blankets of bark or of the skins of animals.

During the wet season the natives of the Mitchell build themselves little platforms of saplings about four feet from the ground. On this the man curls himself up to sleep at night, sometimes making a roof of a curved

piece of bark. I regret to say that he makes his unfortunate wife sit on the ground underneath him all night and keep a small fire going, in order that the smoke may drive away the mosquitoes. He also takes the precaution of taking to bed with him a heavy club, or nulla-nulla, and if she should go to sleep and let the fire out he hits her on the head with the nulla-nulla as a gentle hint to wake up and attend to her wifely duties.

Occasionally the natives will build mosquito-proof huts for use when these pests are particularly bad. These huts are built of bark and are dome-shaped, with a small entrance just sufficient to admit one person at a time. What they are like in the summer when they are filled with as many people as they can hold, and with the entrance so carefully closed that no mosquito can get in, may be better imagined than described.

It is in hunting that the aborigines show their peculiar gifts and their marvellous skill to the best advantage. The whole surface of the ground is an open book which they read without hesitation and without ever making a mistake. No animal or reptile can pass without leaving traces whereby the native knows what he is, how fast he was travelling, how long ago he passed, and whether he was fresh or tired. I have often seen an old woman patiently tracking a lizard, secure in the knowledge that sooner or later she would run it down. Everything, or almost everything, that runs or flies is good for food, if you have no prejudices, and snake and witchetty grub are both delicacies if properly cooked. It is a mistake to imagine that the natives have no idea of the value of good cookery. If they have time they will dig a hole in the ground, cover the bottom with hot stones, insert the food wrapped in green leaves, cover with more hot stones, fill in the earth, and after a few hours turn out a meal that a gourmet might envy. At the same time, if time presses, the Spanish phrase

for boiled eggs, "eggs that have seen the fire," would be a good description for the amount of cooking thought necessary before the food is devoured.

Of native weapons the best known is of course the boomerang, with its wonderful property of returning to the thrower, an invention which alone should entitle the aborigines to considerable credit for inventive genius. The returning boomerang is, however, only a toy, for the obvious reason that if it hit its mark it would not return, and the aboriginal does not reckon on not hitting what he aims at. His accuracy is marvellous. The boomerang is in constant use as a weapon, but it is thrown to hit and does hit with terrible force.

The weapon *par excellence*, however, is the spear, made often only of pointed wood, or with a head of flaked stone or bone, or, since contact with the white man, with a piece of telegraph wire or a flake from a glass bottle. I have myself found natives hunting with stone-headed spears, but they are now very rare.

The spear is thrown by means of a woomera or throwing-stick, a piece of tough wood about twenty-seven inches long and three inches wide, with two large shells at one end and a stout peg bending back at an angle of over forty-five degrees at the other. The woomera is held just above the shell and bent back behind the shoulder, the long lithe spear being held parallel to it with the peg engaged in the end of the spear. When the spear is thrown the woomera nearly doubles the length of the arm and gives it an enormous impetus. I remember once having a spear-throwing competition at the Mitchell River Mission. The trunk of a pandanus-tree, six inches in diameter, at sixty yards was selected as the mark, and one wooden spear went clean through the centre of the tree and projected three inches on the other side. In the days of the Romans, when spear-throwing decided battles, a detachment of Australian javelin-throwers with woomeras would have created a

panic among the enemy. Their accuracy of aim is as remarkable as their range. I have seen a native aim at a bird on the wing and bring it down pierced clean through the body.

Stone weapons were at one time in general use, and I have seen factories in Central Australia which, to judge by the chips and spoiled weapons, must have been in use for centuries. Quartzite is perhaps the most common material for knives and spear-heads; arrows are unknown in Australia, though the usual weapon in New Guinea; adzes and spoke-shaves are, however, not unknown, the latter being made of sharp shells. Axes and hammers were made of heavy stones, with one sharp or flat edge tightly bound between two pieces of wood bent over the stone, all being secured with wax from the roots of the spinifex grass. For fishing it is usual to use spears with four or five prongs made of fish-bones, a dangerous weapon in a fight, as they are almost certain to make a poisoned wound. It is not usual with the aborigines intentionally to poison their spears, but dirt and neglect make the points usually poisonous, to a white man at any rate.

It is usual to credit the natives with a wonderful gift of finding their way in a strange country, a gift even greater than that which many white men possess of riding straight through the bush to their destination without any knowledge of the country, but guided by some strange sense of direction such as a homing pigeon possesses. Personally I do not believe that the ordinary aboriginal possesses this power in any marked degree, and I think that he is much inferior to the white bushman in finding his way in unknown country. In his own country he knows, of course, every stick and stone, and can find his way by day or by night, but even here I notice that he never goes straight, never by the shortest road. He goes first to a water-hole, then to a point of scrub, then to a big tree, travelling roughly in

the right direction, but by a very roundabout road, and you will waste hours if you allow yourself to be guided by him. In unknown country I would any day rather trust the instinct of the white man, for I believe that the aboriginals' special bump of geography is entirely a myth. Personally, at any rate, I have always preferred the compass as a guide, and have generally found that it agreed but ill with the native's confident assertion of the direction in which a certain point lay.

As the aborigines seldom wear clothing, and if they do usually throw it off when travelling in the bush, it is a problem for them how to keep warm in the cold winter nights when the temperature often goes down even in the Far North to something very near freezing, if there is not an actual frost. The difficulty is partially solved by each person making two very small fires and sitting or lying between them. The native accuses the white man of folly in making such a big fire that he cannot go near it, and there is much to be said for the native point of view. A frosty night is usually still, and the smoke of a multitude of little fires soon gathers and hangs over the spot, making a kind of blanket which considerably mitigates the cold. The natives are not early risers, preferring to sleep in the warm sun of the earlier hours of the morning until about 9 A.M. or later, when they go out to hunt for a breakfast. They are always accompanied by a host of dogs, of whom they seem very fond. A dog is often to be seen wrapped in a blanket while the owner has none, and the women are often seen nursing a dog in their arms like a baby. Yet they can be horribly cruel, breaking, for instance, the legs of an animal that they do not want to kill immediately, to prevent its escape. Probably this arises largely from their own insensibility to pain. It is quite a common thing for a native while asleep to put an arm or leg into the fire and to awaken in the morning to find the limb seriously injured, or entirely destroyed, without his

AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINALS—"THE THREE GRACES"

PHOTO. BY HARDIE

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having been aware of the fact. I saw a woman having her arm set by an amateur doctor, and she laughed all the time and considered it a great joke.

Perhaps this insensibility to pain partly accounts for the treatment of the women by the men. They certainly have a bad time of it even when they are young. Their adolescence is celebrated by ceremonies too horrible to be described, and their husbands treat them with much harshness. On the Mitchell River the men wear what is known as a wife-beater by a string round the head, and hanging down at the back of the neck. This wife-beater is a wooden knife about ten inches long and an inch and a half wide, set with shark's teeth. If the wife annoys her lord in any way, the weapon is drawn across the body, inflicting a terrible wound. In justice it should, however, be said that they often inflict similar wounds on themselves, rubbing in earth to prevent the wound closing properly, so that a scar is left, which is regarded as a kind of honour and mark of ability to bear pain. When the women are no longer young their value decreases rapidly. When sailing up the Roper River, I noticed that a tribe of natives would be sometimes on one side and sometimes on the other side of the river. I said to an old man who spoke some English, "Are you not afraid to cross the river on account of the alligators?" "No," he said, "when we cross river we swim one after another and alligator only catch him last fellow. We always put him old woman last fellow, and suppose alligator catch him old woman no matter!"

One of the most marked features of native life, and one which especially darkens it, is the belief in witchcraft and evil spirits. The belief in the power to kill a man by pointing a bone or pointed stone at him is universal. The man who has an enemy goes by night (sometimes wearing shoes of emu feathers, called, in Central Australia, Kadaitsha shoes), and lays on the ground a small bone about two inches long, with a head

of spinifex wax pointing to where his enemy is sleeping. When the man on awaking finds the bone pointing at him he believes that unless he can discover the man who put it there and kill him immediately he will himself die, and if he fails to kill his foe he does invariably die himself within a very few days. I have myself known personally several men who had bones pointed at them. It was useless to argue with them. They had to die, and they did. Others believe that an enemy has by incantations secretly removed their liver or kidneys, and they too rapidly die. They believe the night to be haunted by evil spirits, and will rarely move far from camp if they can avoid it. There seems to be an idea that the spirits of the dead cling to the body and exist so long as it exists. The dead are not usually buried, but roughly embalmed and wrapped in bark and put on a platform of sticks in a tree. The body of a child is often carried about by the mother for months. I should not like to assert as positively as some authors do that they have no idea of a Great Spirit or God. It is of course very difficult to disentangle what they have learnt from white men from their own original beliefs, but some of their apparently original legends do seem to recognize a higher power than man.

Missionary effort among the aborigines has been very largely successful, and where missionary influence extends it has to some extent at any rate arrested that "fading away" which attacks races like the aborigines when they come in contact with civilization.

It has not been found difficult to attract them to one spot, nor to teach them agriculture, building, fencing, brick-making, and other industries. The children learn well up to a certain age, but only a few seem able to advance much beyond it. They are quite susceptible to moral and spiritual teaching, and the native Christians are as fairly consistent in their lives as their white neighbours.

The best proof of their capacity is found in the fact that devoted white missionaries, both men and women, have come so much to love and to believe in them that they have given, and are giving, their lives to their service, under conditions of severe discomfort and practically without any pay or reward. The missionaries are, after all, the best judges, and they show by their action what they believe.

I believe that at a very small cost the aborigines might as scouts be made of great service to the Commonwealth. If the Government were to furnish buildings and material support for a dozen or so of Mission stations, with accompanying out-stations scattered through the Far North, and connected by telephone, and the natives trained to report the presence of any strangers, a work for which they are pre-eminently fitted by nature, the great empty spaces of the north would no longer be a source of danger, for any hostile landing would be at once detected and reported. By working in with the Mission stations an enormous area could thus be covered, at a cost not exceeding £5000 a year. I suggested this plan in detail in a lecture before the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia in 1907. Its adoption would have saved the Commonwealth military authorities considerable anxiety during the earlier stages of the war.

CHAPTER XIV

LIFE ON A KETCH (1906–1915)

THE first Mission vessel that we had in the Gulf was a ketch of twenty-one tons, named by the donor *Francis Pritt*, in memory of the much-loved Archdeacon of Townsville. She was an almost new pearling lugger called the *Santa Cruz*, and had cost over £600 a couple of years before. We were fortunately able to buy her for less than half that sum, and after five years of hard work to sell her again for £50 more than we gave for her, a proof of the staunchness of the little ship.

The ketch rig is almost universal among the pearling boats, and consists of a jib, or jib and staysail, a large fore-and-aft sail, with a high peak to catch light airs, called the main- or fore-sail, and a smaller sail set on an after mast and called the mizzen or jigger. It is a very handy rig, as in very rough weather or when traversing shoal or dangerous water the mainsail can be taken in altogether and the vessel worked under the jib and jigger alone.

The *Francis Pritt* was exceptionally deep, drawing seven feet six inches when unloaded, and this made her a splendid sea-boat in heavy weather, but very troublesome in shallow water, as she had a deep keel with a knack of catching on the bottom and digging a hole from which it was very difficult to get free. It was this defect that finally induced us to sell her, and our forethought was justified, as a month later she caught on the bar of a New Guinea river and became a total wreck. We were very sorry for the new owners, but could not resist a feeling of

satisfaction that a boat which had done such splendid missionary service, and with which we had so many associations, was not destined to spend an ignoble old age as a copra carrier or bêche-de-mer boat. These luggers are mostly built by the Japanese in Thursday Island, and are splendid boats for rough weather. The Japanese captains carry on with a most reckless disregard of danger, but accidents are not common. When they do occur it is usually through gross carelessness, as in the case of a lugger which capsized when trying to enter "The Rip" at Thursday Island one dark and stormy night with the jib sheet made fast. Several of the crew were drowned, the others escaped as by a miracle.

As long as one has good sails and rigging and plenty of sea room, one is far safer in a lugger than in a steamer of ten times her size. The buoyancy is marvellous, and if the boat is skilfully handled it will outride any gale. Unfortunately in the Torres Strait sea room is the very last thing that is available. The whole area of the Strait is sown thickly with coral reefs, while the water between is often too deep to anchor in; consequently, if it comes on to blow towards evening, your only chance is to sail up as close as possible to the lee side of a reef, drop your anchor on the reef, pay out your cable and hang on. This is all very well as long as the wind is steady, but if it shifts, your position is a very unpleasant one, and you are lucky if you scrape off with the loss of your anchor and do not bump on to another reef before morning. I know few more trying experiences than beating up on a dark wet night against a heavy wind and sea in what you hope is the right direction, uncertain, as you wait to go about, whether you are a mile or a few yards from the reefs which you know lie on each side of you. There is a momentary feeling of relief when you have got on the other tack, but you soon begin to wonder whether you did not go about too soon, and whether you are not getting too near the reef on the other side.

Never is morning so welcome, when, if the squalls are not too thick, you may hope to get the bearings of an island or two and form some kind of an idea where you are.

The navigation of the Gulf of Carpentaria is very different from that of the Strait, and on the whole is much safer and easier, but it has its own peculiar difficulties and dangers.

There are only one or two coral reefs, but their place is taken by hidden sandbanks, which are even more unpleasant, as they sometimes shift their position, and the charts on which you have to depend are very incomplete and a hundred years old, being only the track of a small Government sloop which tacked along the coast and marked any obstructions which it happened to notice. For the most dangerous part of the coast, the twenty miles from Crab Island to Vrilya Point, there is no chart of any kind, however primitive. You are supposed either to go clear of all the banks outside the mouth of the Endeavour Strait, a long detour through very rough water, or to find out the dangers for yourself. The eastern coast of the Gulf, down which we had to run for three hundred miles to reach our Mission station on the Mitchell River, is of an extraordinary monotony. Except when the low red cliffs of Pera Head intervene for a short distance, nothing is to be seen but a sandy beach backed by low trees. For hundreds of miles there is not a single mark of any kind to tell you where you are, nor a single building or beacon, not even a conspicuous and unmistakable tree. In consequence of this fact, even the most experienced of us would constantly make mistakes as to the rate of progress or the exact position. This would not have mattered much if all had been clear to seaward, but unfortunately here and there were outlying sandbanks almost six miles from land, just in the natural track of a vessel. You could go inside these or outside, but it was not advisable to go on to them, and many were the

anxious consultations as to where we were and whether or no we had passed one of these lurking dangers. In the day-time one could usually see them, if one could manage to keep the look-out awake, but at night they spoiled all the pleasure of slipping along with a steady breeze and the consciousness that there was no other boat in the Gulf to run into.

South of the Mitchell were tremendous flats off the Staaten and Gilbert Rivers, and one sometimes got a level bottom of one fathom six miles from land. The only thing to be done was to keep out of sight of land altogether. The great advantage of the Gulf was that for nine months of the year the wind was off the land, ensuring more or less calm weather, and when the strong south-east monsoon was not blowing there was always a light wind blowing off the cool land in the early morning, changing in the afternoon to a breeze off the sea on to the heated land.

During the north-west monsoon season from January to March it is madness to navigate the Gulf in a small sailing vessel. Furious gales drive huge rollers, with a run of five hundred miles behind them, far up on the beach, and the broken water extends miles to seaward, while there is no harbour of refuge for vessels, small or great, from Mapoon southwards. At such seasons the level of the whole Gulf will sometimes rise twelve or fourteen feet above the normal high-water mark, sweeping away all marks and beacons.

We never ran our boat during "the north-west," though on one occasion she was rather late in the season and arrived off the mouth of the creek simultaneously with a howling on-shore gale. There were two ladies on board, and as there was no chance of landing them or otherwise saving the vessel, the skipper put her straight for the bar and drove over, crashing and bumping, amid clouds of spray. No vessel less strongly built would have stood it, but fortunately she arrived unhurt.

Again, quite recently, the rule was broken in order to take a dying neighbour of the Mission in to the hospital at Normanton. The voyage down was safely accomplished, but in returning the vessel was driven ashore, fortunately on the top of an exceptionally high tide. She was tied up to a tree and her crew walked seventy miles home. Four or five months later she was safely got off with comparatively little damage.

Given a clear run and no banks the *Francis Pritt* did not mind weather, and I remember the present Chairman of the Australian Board of Missions arriving at Thursday Island full of enthusiasm over a two days' run from the Mission during the whole of which the water had been up to the lee skylight. I don't care for that kind of thing myself, and it is well that nature makes some of us able to enjoy it.

Personally I think that hardly any conditions can be so utterly miserable as those of a small vessel of, say, about ten tons (our Mission vessels ranged from eight to twenty tons) in really bad weather, if it continues for several days. It is almost impossible to stay on deck, unless duty keeps you there, as if you tried to go to sleep you would go overboard; the cabin entrance is covered tightly with a tarpaulin, through which you make your way with difficulty, trying to keep out the wave which tries to enter with you. Below, the air is so thick that you could cut it with a knife and so foul that you feel suffocated, but there is no way of letting in air without water. It is too dark to read, and the lamp will not burn in the air which is supposed to keep you alive. You lie down, having nothing else to do, and hour after hour you are thrown hither and thither like a pea in a football. Every muscle of your body is impartially strained until you ache all over. You would give everything in the world to be still just for five minutes, just long enough to recall the fact that you are a human being and not a mere shuttlecock. Sea-sickness is

nothing. It tends to deaden your sensations and make you drowsy, but this continual bucketing makes sleep impossible; a more terrible crash than usual, a shock as if the boat had come down on an iron plate, and you are flung clear of your bunk, and you land on the floor with a heavy bag on your stomach and a metal teapot in your eye, while you hear the steersman calling out that the compass has gone overboard and that he himself escaped by the skin of his teeth. Food is impossible, and you lie down again wearily, doggedly knowing that it may be two days or possibly more before the weather changes, that till it does you are not likely to see any port. You wonder why any man was such a fool as to invent a ship, and why you were such a fool as to go to sea in one.

On some occasions I had even more vivid experiences. Once I got into what was fortunately only a half-grown cyclone, and never want to meet a full-grown one.

We were sailing along about ten miles from land, and no refuge within two hundred miles, when we saw ahead of us a black wall of cloud stretching from horizon to horizon right across our path; as there was nothing else to be done we sailed right into it till the purple-black inky clouds hung like a pall right overhead; suddenly the wind went right round, and with sails reefed down all we could we plunged into a yeasty swirl of rain, lightning, and foam. A frightful jerk on the jib tore away the block, and while all hands strove to replace it I took the tiller as the job for the least useful man to do. It was a queer scene, the great pillars of driving rain stalking out of the gloom like great ghosts with their heads in the sky, the quickly rising sea (providentially for us the wind was off the land), the dusky sailors clinging to the reeling mast, with the wind tearing great strips from their clothing, the whipping ropes, the growling howl of the wind, like some angry beast vexed that it could not immediately sweep us from its path, the calm stolid face of the skipper as he methodically directed the re-

pairs without a glance at the furious turmoil around him, my own frantic efforts to get the unbalanced boat to steer in something approaching the right direction, all formed a scene which printed itself on one's memory. Fortunately the worst was over in a few hours, but being too busy to make much use of the cabin on this occasion I was wet through for the next three days.

On another occasion we were going through a passage between a series of sandbanks when it came on to blow fairly hard, and the water became the colour of pea-soup. It was no longer possible to distinguish the channel, and we soon found ourselves bumping heavily on the top of a bank, while the waves sent their spray over us in clouds. I think that bumping is one of the most unpleasant sensations one can experience at sea. You speculate as to how long you can hold together, as to whether you will dig a hole from which you will be unable to get out, and many other unpleasant things; and all the time you are shaken by the heavy bump with a maddening regularity. The skipper suggested that we should get up all the ballast and lay it on one side of the ship so as to try to float her on her side, but apart from the undignified nature of the proceeding I had grave doubts as to what she would do if she did float off. Might not the remedy be worse than the disease? I suggested as an alternative that he should get her bows round away from the wind, which was done by putting out the anchor and hauling on it, and then having ascertained by sounding from the dinghy that we were really on the top of the bank, we got up the sails and started to bump our way off. It was only when a wave lifted us a little that we could make a foot or so, but several hours of bumping brought us off at last with renewed confidence in the solidity of the *Francis Pritt.*

But sailing in the Gulf is by no means all storm and trouble. The weather is often perfect, and there is much to interest and delight one. To begin with, the sunsets

are an unending source of delight during the winter months, when the western sky is nightly beautiful beyond all power of words adequately to describe.

I remember one sunset in particular. Imagine a huge Malay kris fashioned of cloud and lying parallel to the horizon, with the point of the blade just dipping into the water. The handle lay just above where the sun had disappeared, and was roughened with a thousand crinkles that seemed the reflex of the sea below ruffled by the evening breeze. Each little hollow was dark indigo, and each little prominence glowed with the incandescent light of incredible rubies. The flat curved blade was a dark steel-coloured cloud flecked with crimson drops like blood. The whole lay against a background of intensely clear duck-egg green, changing higher up into the lightest turquoise blue, and then again into the azure of the upper sky. As one watched the whole thing changed. The handle glowed with a yet intenser light, and the dark smooth blade broke into innumerable crimson folds and wrinkles like the heaving of a blood-red sea. Then the red grew darker and more purple, while underneath, above the hard blue-black line of the sea, shone a clear rose tint which blushed and glowed and faded as the water whitened under the light of the rising full moon.

In calm weather there was generally something to be seen. It might be a gull standing apparently fast asleep on the surface of the water, but on nearer approach you saw that he was standing on the back of a sleeping turtle. Sometimes one met a whole company of turtles, or a dugong roused the crew to eager preparations to spear him. On calm days one sometimes passed dozens of water-snakes, yellow prickly brutes about three feet long, with triangular heads and a wicked eye, or sometimes striped black and yellow like a tiger. Flying-fish would dart through the air like silver arrows and sometimes fall on deck to the great satisfaction of the cat.

If the boat was travelling fairly fast a bit of red or white rag tied to a hook and towed astern would generally secure a magnificent king-fish, white fish, or barramunda; while if one threw anything overboard the remora would dart out from underneath the vessel, seize its morsel, and return to its position of undesired passenger on the ship's bottom. When anchored, there were always a few sharks around, and when landing in the dinghy one might sometimes see underneath it a huge hammerhead shark, unpleasant reminder of what might happen if any of the rollers capsized the little cockle-shell. Once when we were sailing about a mile from the shore I drew the skipper's attention to a patch of dirty water about a hundred yards off, and while we were watching there emerged about thirty feet of the back of a big whale, which made off to sea undisturbed by us. On another occasion I saw two threshers leaping high into the air and descending with an ominous thud on their unfortunate victim below.

In spite of the vicinity of animal life there always seemed to me to be something inexpressibly mournful and lonely in the great vistas of the Gulf hardly ever lighted by any other sail than our own. Some people enthuse about the sea, but it always seemed to me unspeakably dreary to hear the wind moaning in the rigging as we would anchor for the night, rolling heavily in the swell, and though there was no danger of collision I would order the lantern to be lighted to give a little touch of human presence to the scene. Then the South Sea Island crew would get out their prayer and hymn books, and we would sing and pray to the accompaniment of the creaking cordage and the wash of the water till the sense of loneliness passed away, and one realized that, as Sir Humphrey Gilbert said, one was as near to Heaven by sea as by land, and one could gaze up into the great stars as they glowed overhead with a sense of companionship, for did they not shine on land?—and I

had learnt to love them in the great plains of Central Australia.

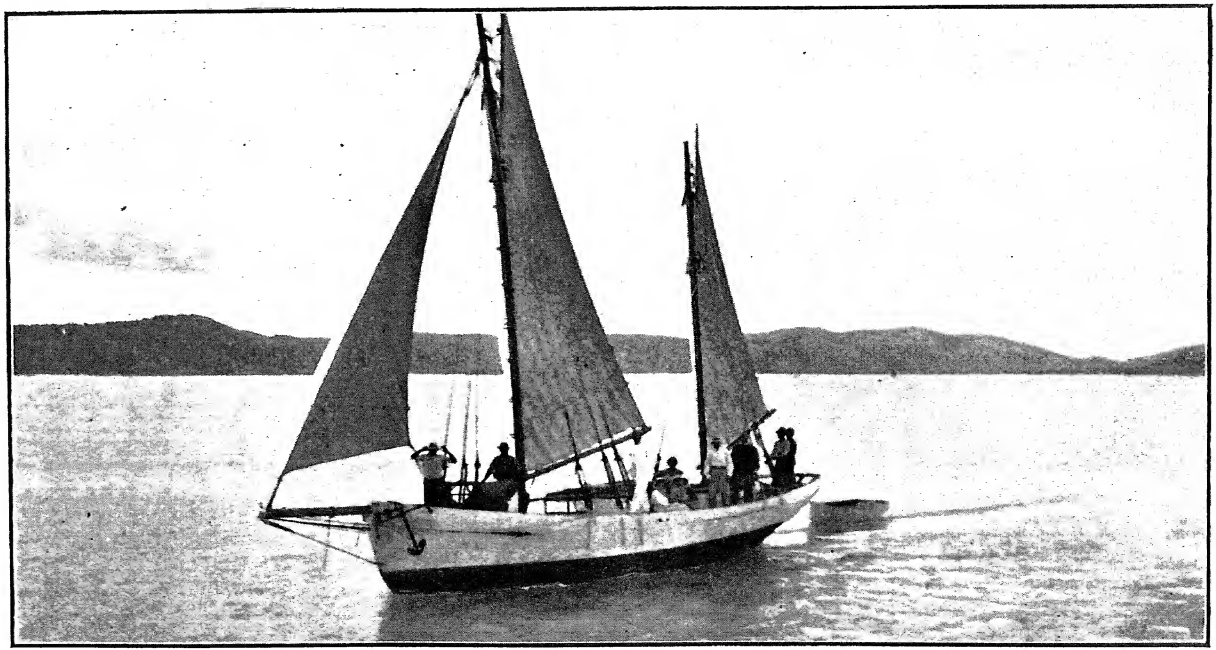
No, I confess that I am no true seaman, for I think I was always glad to return to what seemed to me the fuller life ashore, though at times I thoroughly enjoyed the beauty and mystery of the sea.

On the *Francis Pritt* we had at various times five skippers, of whom two were white master mariners and three were South Sea men with no certificate beyond their own capacities. In no way, save their inability to understand the chart, were the coloured men inferior to the white, and I always felt at least as great confidence in them in an emergency. Once show them a course and point out the hidden dangers, and they never required to be told again. I lay no claim to seamanship, but on one occasion I confess to a glow of triumph.

I desired to visit the Albert River, and my skipper was a Fiji man named John Wesley, a man at that time of extraordinary strength and endurance, and a fine seaman, but he had never been down the Gulf before, and I had to tell him everything as to charts and sandbanks. I had only once visited the Albert before, and then merely as a passenger, so I asked the captain of the small steamer which acted as tender to the coast boat to tow me in on the next occasion on which he was towing in the lighter from the big steamer ten miles out in the bay. The bar is seven miles from the shore and the passage somewhat intricate. He demanded what seemed to me an unreasonable sum, and so, borrowing a chart from the Norman Bar pilot, we set off one evening to investigate. Fortune was with us. About 9 A.M. we happened to strike the fairway buoy, found that there was a fair wind and a good tide, so I took my courage in my hands and conned her from the bows with John at the helm, and we ran in without a break and had the pleasure of passing the steamer at the mouth of the river coming out. I confess to being somewhat uplifted.

On another occasion the white skipper took to his berth with malarial fever and the remark, "You must sail the ship as I am not able to do anything." The weather was bad, and I had a lively time for three days until I was able to get the skipper up on deck again and he resumed command.

On the whole I was not sorry when my work by sea came to an end. Yet I shall always have a warm place in my heart for the gallant little *Francis Pritt No. I* and her successor, *Francis Pritt No. II*, and for the many good comrades, white and brown, with whom for so many years I faced the stormy seas of the Far North.



"FRANCIS PRITT," MISSION SHIP OF THE DIOCESE OF CARPENTARIA

CHAPTER XV

MOA (1908–1910)

THE Island of Moa lies about thirty miles to the north of Thursday Island, and is some sixteen miles long by twelve wide. It is marked by a high mountain called Moa Peak, which is a conspicuous landmark throughout the Strait. To the east is the sharp volcanic cone of Naghir, and to the west the large Island of Badu. When in 1905 the South Sea Islanders were deported from Queensland, a certain number were exempted, either because they had been twenty years in the country, or because they were married to native women, or because they were possessed of property. These men settled down, with Torres Strait Island women as their wives, on the Island of Moa, and in 1907 the Government Resident at Thursday Island asked me to be responsible for their spiritual welfare, as most of them were already in touch with the Church of England. The only teacher available was a devoted woman, Deaconess Buchanan, to whom I refer in a later chapter. She settled down among them quite alone, and in a very short time acquired a wonderful influence over them.

The people of Moa supported themselves by fishing for shell and bêche-de-mer in a cutter belonging to the island, and by gardening on an extensive scale. So industrious did they show themselves in this respect that the Government at my suggestion increased the size of their Reserve to six times its original area, in order to provide room for their distant gardens and plantations, only patches of soil being suitable for the

purpose. The village consists of grass houses built in New Guinea fashion, with a floor of bamboo raised several feet above the ground. I never saw much architectural originality except in the case of one man, who built his house in the shape of an eight-pointed star and explained that the eight little triangular recesses were intended as bedrooms for his children in order of their arrival! The village is, like the other Torres Strait islands, governed by two Councillors, whose robe of office is a red jersey with the word "Councillor" on the breast. They are aided by a native policeman, and have as assessor the white missionary or, where there is no Mission, the Government school-teacher.

The duties of the policeman are somewhat unusual. At 6 A.M. he rings a bell and takes all the boys and girls down to the beach for a bathe, threatening, it is presumed, all sharks, sword- and stone-fish with the terrors of the law if they intrude. Bathing over, it is his duty to go round and see if the wives are getting their husbands' breakfasts ready. One over-zealous policeman on Moa nearly caused a wives' strike. They came to me and complained that he not only came to see if they had the pot on the fire. They did not object to that, but they said that he came in and looked to see what was in the pot, and they considered that to be an interference with the liberty of the subject. So after full inquiry I had to decree that in future the policeman might come to the door and see if the pot was on the fire, but he was not to enter or look inside it, but take for granted that it contained something more than hot water.

The men were fined for any offence against the laws of the community, but women were usually set to weed the paths! Any grave moral offence was, however, punished by shaving half the head, a mark of disgrace which was much dreaded.

I do not know why this punishment was restricted to

the women, but inequality of social justice prevails in the Torres Strait as well as in more civilized countries.

A record of a visit to the island in July 1909, about a year after the Mission had been started, will show how steadily the work of the Mission was growing.

"I left Thursday Island at 11 A.M. in the *Francis Pritt*. The weather was squally, but the wind and tide favourable. A heavy squall near Scott's Rock compelled us to double-reef the mainsail, and there was a rough sea, but we did fairly well and ran in through the opening of the reef under Moa Peak a little before 4 P.M. On my last visit we could not see to enter, and had to anchor outside all night, a very unpleasant experience. It was dead low water and several patches on the bottom seemed unpleasantly close. I went ashore about 5 P.M., and as the new church house was not yet occupied, I took up my quarters there. About 7.30 P.M. all the community gathered for prayers, and I gave a short address. I slept on the veranda, and when I woke in the early dawn I looked down the long line of the broad village street, planted each side with young coco-nut trees, to the conical grassy hill behind, the Peak wreathed in clouds above it, and then towards the east, where the dawn was brightening over the sea behind the volcanic island cone of Naghir, and showing the white waves breaking on the reef, which was already beginning to show its rich red brown in contrast to the blue water beyond. At 6 A.M. the first bell rang, and all the children gathered for a swim under the care of the policeman, and at 7.15 the community met for morning prayer. After breakfast I visited the school, and was much pleased with the intelligence of the children. I was explaining to them the meaning of a sacred monogram which hung from my watch-chain and said, 'It came from Athens, but I suppose you don't know where that is,' when I was answered by a chorus

of 'The chief town of Greece.' Some reference was made to the new Governor of Queensland, and I found that they could tell me all about his name, history, and previous appointments. The reading was excellent, though I chose a part of the Old Testament that they had not previously seen, and the drawing and map-making were particularly good.

"The rest of the morning I was occupied in passing the contractor's work on the new house and other practical matters. In the afternoon Soni, one of the Councillors, took me out to see the gardens, which are doing remarkably well. The bananas and yams are bearing well, and the coco-nuts coming on. He had lost nearly a ton of pumpkins owing to there being no boat to take them to market, and I promised to take a lot in for him by the *Francis Pritt*. In the evening the new church room was used for the first time, and there was ample accommodation for all. Not much furniture is needed, as the congregation sit on mats on the floor. I confirmed four men and six women. The service was a very solemn one, and the congregation most reverent. The singing was very sweet, and far more powerful than had been possible in the old crowded little thatch house.

"Next morning at 7 A.M. there was a celebration of the Holy Communion, and the catechumens and elder scholars were allowed to be present at the end of the room. To my pleasure the 'Kyrie' was sung most sweetly, and the whole service was very beautiful. We had no need of a reredos, for through the open window behind the temporary altar we could see the ranges of hills rising up clothed in vegetation, and adorned with pinnacles of rock, where the fleecy clouds were floating across the deep blue sky, while the noise of the surf on the reef and the sighing of the morning wind in the trees formed a musical accompaniment. Nothing could have been more reverent than the behaviour of the whole

congregation. After breakfast I had a meeting of the men to discuss matters of importance to the community. The first of these was the question of the extension of the boundaries of the Mission, as the numbers were growing, and new-comers were having to go farther afield to find land suitable for cultivation. A petition had already been sent down to the Government, but no answer had been received, and I was requested to take the matter up. Then there was the need of some kind of survey and some marking and mapping of the boundaries of the different cultivations, and I promised to try to get some one to undertake this. Then there was the application of new-comers for land on which to build their houses, as the village has already nearly filled the long street parallel to the beach to the north. It was determined to allow new-comers to build to the south of the Mission Buildings Reserve, along the beach in the opposite direction, and a big tree was marked as the point at which building might begin. Then an intricate point was raised as to the ownership of certain coco-nut trees planted by others before the Mission was started, but choked and ready to perish until 'their lives had been saved' by some of the villagers who had cleared and tended them. In some instances the original planter had given them to more than one person at a time, and the question was whether the tree belonged to the person to whom it had been given or to the person 'who save his life.'

"Then the united wisdom was asked to sit in judgment on an application for the adoption of a child, a favourite native custom. One such recent case had been emphatically censured and prevented. A woman with only one child had given it away to another woman apparently to save herself trouble. She was ordered to take it back at once. In the present instance the parents had eight children, and a single man of good character wished to adopt a little boy. It was resolved

that while the practice of giving children for adoption was not to be encouraged as a rule, it might be permitted in this case on an agreement being made in writing setting forth all the conditions and circumstances of the case, so that neither side could afterwards repudiate it. After the council I took some photographs and watched the pumpkins being taken off to the *Francis Pritt* in a small cutter surrounded by delighted boys, hanging on to sides and rigging.

"At low water I went out on the reef and watched the men fishing with a net kindly given by Mr. Kashiwagi. It has been of the very greatest service, and seems to be well kept and looked after, although it has several times been torn by catching in it young sharks and other large fish. The haul that I saw consisted of some sixty plump little fish of about half a pound weight; often the catches are much larger. On Thursday afternoon I walked out to the beautiful little cemetery in a fold of the hills, with a vision of brown reef and white surf and blue sea beyond. There is only one tombstone, a marble cross with the inscription 'Alea, aged 19.' He was a young man just married, and his little son is laid beside him. The cross can be seen, so the lads who guided me said, far out at sea. The rest of the afternoon was occupied with going into many details of the work with Deaconess Buchanan, to whose untiring zeal and noble example the whole success of the Mission is due.

"In the evening all again met for service, and I baptized two men, one being the village policeman and the other the father of a large family. I had intended to go on board so as to be ready for an early start in the morning, but as we had some native passengers to take in, I determined to sleep on shore. It was fortunate that I did, as, when the dinghy was going off to the ship with some of the crew who had come on shore for service, it was capsized and sunk by the heavy

sea, fortunately without damage to the boat or men, save a total wetting.

"I was determined to get off in good time and had every one up before 6 A.M., and there was a long procession along the beach in the grey morning to the point where the dinghy could come ashore on a sandy beach. There we parted amid much shaking of dusky hands and many cries of farewell, leaving the Deaconess to conduct her flock back to their abodes. We got off about 7 A.M., and it was well that we had made an early start, for wind and tide were both against us and we had to beat all the way in a flurry of squalls and rain, which at times blotted out all the islands, much-needed guides amid the perplexing network of reefs, which are very dangerous in the dark or when the wind falls and the swift tide bears you helplessly towards the reef without any possibility of anchoring in the deep water which extends to within a few feet of it. We came in a new way, round the end of the Long Reef and to the west of Wednesday Island, and arrived safely about 4.30 P.M., after a most interesting and happy visit."

Some few months afterwards I visited Moa in the wet season for the church festival, which fell on January 25, St. Paul's Day.

"On Monday morning, January 24, I went on board the *Francis Pritt* at 9 A.M. with many forebodings as to the length and unpleasantness of the voyage, for it had been pouring with rain every few hours during the last week in true wet-season style, and there had not been a breath of wind to dispel the still, airless calm in which the rain fell in straight lines with deafening roar, and when it ceased the slightest sound was audible in the utter stillness. It had just ceased raining when I got on board, but the heavy clouds hung all round, and the tide was dead against our starting, while there was not

wind enough to move a toy boat. As there seemed no chance of starting before the tide turned, I went down to the cabin to read, and after about an hour was startled by the welcome sound of the anchor-chain, and going on deck found that a light breeze had sprung up just sufficient to give her way, and in a few minutes we were waving adieu to the wharfinger as we crept past the end of the jetty and out into the open, when the breeze strengthened. Our way led round a long sand-bank to the westward of Wednesday Island, but there is a little-used passage over the bank which cuts off four miles, and as the tide was high and wind fair we determined to risk it, and taking our bearings carefully were soon through and standing for the eastward end of the Long Reef. Soon Travers Island appeared ahead to the right of where Moa lay on the horizon like a reddish purple cloud, and in a couple of hours more, the wind holding fair, we were running to windward of its emerald green mounds and bearing up for Moa. We ran through the entrance at 3.45 P.M., after a pleasant and for the time of year remarkably quick run of over five hours, which I felt as a rebuke to my pessimistic anticipations. Moa boasts two flagstaffs, one in front of the Mission House, and the other in front of the Chief Councillor's. I was concerned to notice that these flags were half-mast, and on landing I was met by Deaconess Buchanan and the Councillors, who informed me that the child which was to have been baptized to-day had died the previous night, and as soon as I had got my robes the funeral procession started for the cemetery, which is about a mile away. The sun was still shining brightly as the little company wound along the narrow track through the long green grass, now passing an unfenced garden patch cleared in the scrub, now crossing a running stream—I had taken the precaution of adding sea-boots to my robes—now passing through a forest glade, till we came out on the natural clearing in the

woods, backed by the blue sea and white-fringed reef, which forms the cemetery. The little home-made coffin was lowered and tenderly wrapped in mats before the earth was filled in by the hands of the sorrowing father and his friends, and we came away with sweet, solemn words of the Office ringing in our ears. After tea one of the Councillors came to consult the Deaconess. Three cutters loaded with natives of another island had arrived, having heard of our festival of to-morrow, St. Paul's Day. Where were they to sleep, what were they to eat—an important question when food is not too plentiful and hospitality expected to be unbounded —how long were they to be allowed to stay? It was decided that the married men and women and the girls were to be distributed and entertained as far as possible, but that the young men must sleep on board their boats, and that all must depart on the day after the festival. The Mission House was crowded to the door for Evensong, when I spoke of the Holy Communion about to be celebrated on the morrow. I slept on the Mission House veranda, and had, as I thought, protected myself sufficiently with a new mosquito net, but somehow or other they found their way in, and I spent most of the night in trying to find out how they did it. At any rate the net was 'stiff with them,' as the Irishman said, in the morning. The rain fell and the wind howled, and I congratulated myself that I was not on the *Francis Pritt.*

"At 7.30 A.M. on St. Paul's Day a most reverent congregation met for the celebration of the Holy Mysteries; and it was sweet to hear the soft voices singing the 'Kyrie' and breaking gently of their own accord, after the blessing, into the refrain of 'Lord Jesus think on me.' Most of the morning was spent in examining the excellent models of canoes, weapons, etc., sent in by the natives for the exhibition which was arranged on the veranda of the Mission House, and in

awarding prizes, etc. At 2 P.M. the Mission House was crowded to the doors, when I announced and distributed the prizes for the best work. For models of canoes, etc., Samwell obtained the first prize for an excellent Maubiag canoe very carefully made and finished, and Sam Solomon the second for a finely ornamented specimen of a Solomon Island canoe. Soni obtained a prize for a pair of finely finished Lifu Island war clubs, and Mukubi for a good model of a dugong carved in wood and polished. Simeon obtained a prize for some remarkably clever water-colour paintings. Women's work was represented by twelve children's frocks, which had been sent to Thursday Island for criticism and award. All were declared to be excellently done, and the first prize was awarded to Alite and the second to Gene. The audience then adjourned to view the exhibits, which were the object of intense interest for the next half-hour. Among them were noticeable a clever model whale-boat and crew by Avieu, a Fiji canoe by Joe Bann, an excellent model of the *Francis Pritt* by Sam Solomon, and various native weapons and ornaments, and a vividly coloured portrait of Lord Kitchener by a Darnley native. Some of the bigger boys now retired into the bush to adorn themselves, while some of the women went in for a banana-eating contest which afforded much amusement. Presently singing was heard in the distance, and the boys returned dressed in bright green banana leaves, with bean rattles on their ankles and pink blossoms stuck in their hair, and treated us to a series of songs and dances, waving their painted cobba-cobba clubs to the time.

"When the boys had done their part they were succeeded by a strong party of Maubiag men wearing green girdles and curious mitres cut out of green banana leaf. They were very big powerful men, and gave a series of striking 'plays,' of which the most picturesque was the ball dance. Then they all retired, returned

and planted with ceremony a flag bearing the picture of their island, and again returned to prepare their final 'play,' the Penirock Island dance. At 8 P.M. all assembled for evening service. As the Mission Room would not accommodate all the congregation, it was arranged that the singers and speakers should be on the veranda, and the congregation seated on the ground in front of the building. After a short evening prayer and hymns, I gave an address on St. Paul, and then came the feature of the evening, addresses by three elder men on their recollections of the conditions which prevailed before Christianity came to the Islands, 'when all was dark,' as they put it. First of all came old Kaio, who had caused some excitement earlier in the day by heading a little procession carrying a most realistic model, more than half life-size, of a South Sea Island bier containing a properly swathed and carefully carved and painted wooden human body, the toes projecting from the bier in gruesome fashion. This was erected on four high sticks in front of the Mission House to provide Kaio with a text. He described how, when he was a boy, every man slept weapon in hand, and to be a stranger meant to be instantly killed; how when he came first to Moa and Badu and Maubiag, mutual suspicion and warfare reigned where now all was peace and brotherly love; and how Christian burial had superseded the many superstitions and evil rites connected with the dead. Then came Soni, the Councillor, who told us of the feuds and hatreds that prevailed in his Island of Lifu when he was a boy, and of the depths of ignorance and darkness from which they had been rescued by the missionaries who came in their ship with many sails and anchored in the still lagoon 'where no tide run,' and where you could see through the clear water the anchor lying on the bottom twenty fathoms below. Now, he said, the Gospel of Jesus Christ had come like dynamite and shattered all the old evil customs and

killed them dead, as when dynamite is exploded in the water and kills all the fish around. Lastly came Joe Bann, who also told us of his boyhood and of the heathen tribes up country, where it was death to wake the King, and where if a child cried and disturbed him it was instantly killed and eaten, and how the first missionary came and 'called the King for prayers,' and paid for his temerity with his life, and how now all was changed, and we were children of the light and no longer of the darkness; and how St. Paul's Mission was working for the people of Moa and filling their hearts with thankfulness. Fortunately the rain held off during the evening, and as the full moon rose over the rocky point of the bay and shone on the young palm-trees and the brown houses of the village and the breathless, listening crowd, it was a memorable scene. A final hymn brought the festival to an end, a day much to be remembered in Moa; and before midnight down came the rain and wind, and it blew and poured all night long, making me thankful that Moa is a snug anchorage in the north-west season.

"Matins and the school prize distribution were fixed for 9 A.M., but the weather was so bad that we had to wait until 10 A.M., and even then had to sing a number of hymns before the rain lightened sufficiently to allow of any one being heard at all. Among the boys Malaki and Napau were equal first with 436 marks out of a possible 452, and among the girls Alice was first with 447. A number of excellent coloured maps of Australia were exhibited, each child having done one from a copy and one from memory; a number of recitations and repetitions also showed the children's powers of memory.

"After the children and their parents had taken the opportunity of a lull in the storm to disperse, I found myself sitting as a judge in a long-standing matrimonial dispute, though the troubles are happily only *in posse*, and therefore it is to be hoped capable of a happy issue.

The Deaconess and one of the Councillors acted as assessors, and on a bench in front of me were seated a comely damsel and a stalwart youth with melancholy eyes, while between sat the young woman's unbending mother. It was a case of true love on both sides, and all seemed to be going well when the mother suddenly withdrew the consent she had given some months before, and on which arrangements had been made for the wedding. I had to adjourn the case for more expert legal advice and evidence as to age, and the mother led away her sad and rebellious daughter in triumph. The rain continued to pour down and the wind to blow in wild gusts, and we were devoutly thankful that the weather had held up so well over the festival.

"In the evening a meeting of men was held, and a number of points connected with the work and government of the settlement were discussed. Next morning I left at 8.30 A.M. The night had been stormy and the sky was black and lowering. We had one of the roughest trips I remember, under close-reefed sail, and I was wet to the skin soon after starting, but the old skipper managed the *Francis Pritt* with great skill, and we came to our anchorage at Thursday Island soon after 1 P.M., though it was blowing so hard that it was not an easy matter to anchor at all. Altogether I felt that St. Paul's Mission at Moa had had a very successful festival, and I was thankful that I had been privileged to be present. We heard afterwards that a cutter had been lost the same afternoon near Naghir, not far off our course. The crew were picked up by another vessel which was in company. So the *Francis Pritt* once more proved her seaworthiness."

CHAPTER XVI

MOA—*continued* (1910–1915)

Miss Gertrude Robson, who died in July 1917, after being engaged for some years in missionary work in New Guinea, and who paid many visits to Moa, kindly permitted me to quote her description of the children of Moa:

"A great deal of the charm of the life at St. Paul's Mission, Moa, comes from the children on the station. They are so bright, so happy, so all-pervading, like the bush flowers which brighten the island after the wet season. At sunrise, when the bell rings for them to assemble for bathing parade, you hear them twittering and chirping round the belfry like honeysuckers. A few minutes later their voices and laughter come to you mingled with the music of the waves on the beach. They emerge from the sea fresh and shining, but there seems to be no need of towels for they dry like ducks. At morning prayers the children flock in silently to their places, boys on one side, girls on the other. Each kneels a moment in prayer, very reverently and simply, eyes shut, faces raised, hands folded, and then sits on the matted floor quietly until the hymn is given out.

"They enjoy singing, and have musical voices and musical ears enabling them to sing in parts very correctly. After prayers the children stand till their elders have filed out and then follow.

"Breakfast consists of bananas, yams, or, if times are good, of damper. When the big bell rings for school

A NATIVE GARDEN ON MOA ISLAND

CHILDREN OF THE TORRES STRAITS ISLANDS SPEARING FISH

the children, who have been getting firewood for their parents, or sweeping up in front of their grass huts with quaint home-made besoms, come swiftly and gather round the doorstep until a small bell is rung, then you hear all down the line a murmur, "Teassher has rung the bell,' with great emphasis on the verb, for their tastes would lead them to say 'ring.' They are much like other children in school.

"Their answers are never stereotyped; they reason out things in their own way. Very few white children are so conversant with the Catechism and Old and New Testament stories. They learn writing, reading, arithmetic, and singing, besides a little geography and general knowledge.

"All their work is done standing or sitting on the floor, and for all equipment they have slates and pencils, and a few Primers and First Readers.

"After school, if the tide is low, they go out on the reef, armed with their little fish-spears and iron hooks, and generally bring home a good store of fish and strange-looking sea-beasts for the evening 'ki-ki.' They go far out on the reef, their blue or red *lava-lavas* or overalls making bright spots of colour on the brownish green coral, and their voices ringing out in one of their school songs, or a hymn they have been practising for service, or sometimes a strange native melody.

"At the evening prayer there are sometimes some very sleepy little worshippers. The rows of babies begin by escaping from their mothers to scramble across the floor to a father or big brother or sister, but they generally drop to sleep before the service is over. The children play about in the village or on the beach until nine o'clock, when the Councillor blows a blast on a big conch shell or the policeman on his whistle, and all fly to their grass huts, curl up on a mat, and are soon asleep in spite of mosquitoes.

"One beautiful moonlight evening the children had a

little 'cobba-cobba' or 'sing-dance,' as they call it in English, on the beach. First the girls danced and sang on the hard white sand, on which the moon threw their waving shadows as they swayed gracefully to and fro in perfect time to the strange, wild melodies they chanted. Then the girls sang, beating time with their hands, while the boys danced the hunting and fishing dances of their fathers, the little silver ripples washing round their feet at times, and the glorious moon background silhouetting their graceful lithe figures. At the sound of the whistle they melted away as if by enchantment. The most venturesome would hardly dare disobey a Councillor.

"On Saturdays there is no school, but the children are bound to do some work for their 'teassher.' They bring wood and water, and clean up the square on which the school is built.

"It is a pretty sight to see the little figures weeding and sweeping among the coco-nut palms. Now and again a shrill cry of 'Basket!' is heard, and a boy with a palm-frond basket goes round to collect a pile of weeds, which he carries away to be burnt. They manage to get a good deal of fun out of it. Every now and then a chorus of fresh young voices breaks out into a native song or perhaps a recitation from the Reader, 'Ha ha! look at me,' or 'I am a fat cat.' There will be a peal of laughter at some witticism, or a storm of indignation, 'Naumi sleep all the time,' or 'Andai he too much play,' or 'Bilo he make map along sand.'

"And when Joe, their Fijian taskmaster, says, 'Now you fellow, altogether finiss, now you go climb Moa Peak or you go swim Naghir' (a neighbouring island), off they fly like a flock of dark butterflies. The children are not allowed to speak their native dialect, or 'language' as they call it, at all in school hours, and are discouraged as much as possible from using it at home.

"The boys are constantly stopping in play or school

to 'make fast calico'—i.e. give a peculiar twist to the ends of their *lava-lavas* which keep them up in a marvellous manner. When reprimanded for talking or playing they burst into tears and rub each eye alternately very quickly indeed with their knuckles.

"Nasona, a little monkey of about seven, lifts up his voice and bellows if aggrieved—a simply tremendous volume of sound issues forth. One hesitates before arousing storms even of penitence in his heart, unless school is just over and he can pour forth his wails in the open air.

"On Sundays the children bring fresh flowers, ginger-lilies, or papaw blossom to decorate the room for service; and they come to church dressed in their very best, boys in clean singlets and *lava-lavas*—one in a sailor hat of which he is inordinately proud—girls in fresh print overalls; two or three of the babies in hot knitted woollen bonnets and little else. The children know all the responses, say the Creed, and sing the 'Venite' beautifully. After Church and Sunday-school there is a class for older boys and girls, who are learning the second part of the Catechism with a view to Confirmation some day. The children are easily managed with firmness and kindness. For any misbehaviour in village life the Councillors sentence them to a day's weeding or firewood-getting. One day, when with great rejoicings, dancing, and singing a turtle was brought ashore, a heedless but lovable boy, Aarona, hurled his fish-spear at the turtle's eye, bringing it out on the spear point. When spoken to afterwards about this, he sobbed piteously.

"They are very good to the babies; quite big boys will watch them and tend them lovingly and skilfully. They are obedient to their parents, who have great affection for their children and take interest in their progress. One of the men was very ill, and 'teassher' scolded him when she heard he had carried his son

Napau, a boy of eleven, home from the bush in the heat of the day. Mukubi, the father, just took the boy's feet in his hand and turned them to show how the sharp grass had cut them. No father will take his boy or mother her girl to help in bush or garden or on the reef without first asking 'teassher's' permission. And the children love school—give them a holiday and they will all be back at the school-house before long, and you hear 'A cat on a mat' or the multiplication tables being cheerfully recited.

"They have not many games. The bush and reef form their playgrounds, and each child has to help to procure the family 'ki-ki.' Sometimes on Saturday the bigger boys will go off into the bush early after wild pig, and oh! the joy and triumph, the song and dance with which the young heroes are greeted should they return carrying a pig slung on saplings."

In 1913 the people of Moa accomplished their task, long looked forward to, of building themselves a church, and I went over in November to open it.

The following account was written by an English lady visitor:

"With a view of assisting a little in the preparations for the many visitors, Mrs. Nash, Mr. Culverwell, and I accompanied Mrs. Cole to Moa on November 26. The *Banzai* brought us over very well, as the wind was fair, and we did the trip in just over four and a half hours. On Friday afternoon a contingent from Badu arrived. The village was filling up steadily with coloured visitors from the other islands. Four large booths or sheds of plaited coco-nut branches had been erected and allotted for their entertainment. In each shed some of the chief men and women of Moa prepared and served the food for their visitors. We watched one batch of men squatting on coco-nut mats before two long rows of plates and

pannikins ready for a repast of yams, rice, bread and butter, and I don't know what else. Some pigs had been caught on Hammond Island, and a large quantity of turtle kept ready in captivity, besides large quantities of flour, sugar, fruit, etc. The white folk each brought some supplies, chiefly tinned, and we were supplied from the village with turtle, roast pig, etc. We had meals in the school hall as soon as our party grew too large for Mrs. Cole's veranda, and for sleeping some of us used the school veranda and the rest of us had tents. Mrs. Nash and I shared a commodious edifice with side walls of grass, end wall of coco-nut branches, a tent fly for a roof, and a thick layer of grass for a carpet. The bathing off the beach was glorious, especially when some dozens of native girls joined us and devoted much energy to seeing that we did not drown.

"On Saturday, soon after midday, the Bishop and the rest of the Thursday Island visitors arrived in the *Goodwill*, kindly lent for the occasion by Mr. Walker of Badu, and Mr. K. O. Mackenzie most kindly taking charge of her. A large number of people had hoped to avail themselves of the opportunity for a visit to Moa, but various causes, among which might perhaps be reckoned a very boisterous wind on the preceding day, and the prospect of the 7 A.M. start, had thinned down the number of passengers to ten, Miss McKee and Miss Mills representing the lady visitors. The *Goodwill* is fitted with steam auxiliary power, but unfortunately the engines refused to play their part. The wind was contrary at starting, but Mr. R. Hockings kindly came to the rescue with his motor-launch and towed the *Goodwill* out as far as Tuesday Island. After that all went well except for the trifle that the Bishop was the only passenger not prostrated by sea-sickness. On Saturday evening at 7.30 a short service was held outside the school-house. Some hymns were sung very sweetly in native dialect by rows and

rows of dark figures squatting in the sand. Mr. Cole then gave notice of the Sunday services and, in the name of the community generally, welcomed all visitors, white and coloured. The Bishop then gave a short address, telling the folk of St. Paul's what pleasure it gave him to be present at Moa for the opening of their church. He proceeded to remind them that gladness and rejoicing were acceptable to God, but that they must be careful that these never degenerated into over-excitement and licence, and that they should also remember that gaiety and pleasure were given us as a refreshment, that after them we might return with renewed vigour to our daily work.

"As a rule dancing is severely discouraged on Saturday nights, but this being an exceptional occasion notice was given that dancing would be allowed till 10 P.M., when all the village must be quiet. We went to see a little of the dancing. Any one in search of good movements for physical-culture drill might well take notes on the Torres Strait Islanders' dances. They consist of one set of movements repeated over and over again to a spirited but rather monotonous chant, and each island has its own particular songs and dances. The men's voices are sweet and deep, but the women's are apt to be shrill. On Sunday morning the whole village assembled outside the school hall to be marshalled for the procession. First came the processional cross borne by the head boy of the Mission school. Then all the Mission schoolboys in clean white singlets and red and white striped *lava-lavas*. Following them came the schoolgirls, and then the women. These were all dressed alike, in white dresses with a bow of dark red ribbon on their hair, and the effect was excellent.

"The men of St. Paul's came next, and after them followed the Bishop in his cope, preceded by Mr. Cole bearing the pastoral staff. The native visitors formed up and lined the route to be taken by the procession,

and the white visitors took their places in the church. At 9.30 all were ready and the procession moved forward singing, unaccompanied, 'Onward, Christian Soldiers.' It was very picturesque to see the gaily clad islanders with their eager dark faces moving solemnly along. They walked in procession all round the church, and then, still singing, filed up the aisle and took their places. The church just held the white visitors and the St. Paul's folk, and then all the others came up close to the open doors along each side of the church to hear the service. The Bishop proceeded with the Dedication and Consecration Service, followed by a celebration of the Holy Communion. The singing throughout was beautiful, and displayed the clear enunciation of the English language, which is one of the excellences of the Moa teaching. The congregation were very reverent and attentive.

"The Bishop in his sermon congratulated the people of St. Paul's on having collected out of their own money the entire cost of their church, with the exception of two small grants from English societies; and on having built it entirely themselves without having to employ any hired labour. He pointed out to them that the need of a community for a building set apart and consecrated as a church might be compared with the need of a seaport town of a jetty. It represented the spot on which they met to offer their prayers and praises, just as the jetty was the place where all the produce of a country was collected together and then loaded on the vessels and sent forth across the sea. Also they met in the church to receive the blessings of God, just as the jetty was the place where all the imports to a country were discharged by the ships which brought them from abroad. His Lordship also made a touching reference to Deaconess Buchanan, now lying dangerously ill in Brisbane, and reminded his hearers how much the Mission owed to her devotion and love. He hoped that their new church would be a great blessing to them and

to their children after them, and that gradually the sacred memories associated with a place where we have prayed and praised in joy and sorrow might cling to their church and make it to each one of them the dearest spot upon their island.

"After the sermon the head-man of the visitors from Maubiag took his place just below the sanctuary holding an offertory bag, and the stalwart Maubiag men and women filed up the aisle, dropped their offerings into the bag, and passed out through the chancel door. When Maubiag had filed through, Badu followed, and then successively the Yam, York, Adam, and Cocoanut Island representatives filed up the church and dropped their offerings into the bags held by their respective head-men. Some of the children had been grasping threepenny and sixpenny bits so firmly in their hot little fists that determined efforts were needed on the part of the mothers to shake them into the bags. Hymns were sung while the offerings were being made, and then a collection was taken up among those inside the church. The whole offertory amounted to over £52. Besides the white visitors there were a large number of native communicants.

"The church is of fibro-cement and is painted a greyish blue inside, with dark beams, and a soft pink outside. It holds about two hundred people, and is seated with very good home-made benches. Three doors opening down each side as well as the doors at each end make plenty of ventilation, and the building is well put together. It has cost so far £160 for material, all labour being given free, and is free of debt. An altar has been given and a lectern and prayer desk are on their way. A credence table and brass altar desk are promised. A font and several other things still remain to be provided. The brass compass-bowl from the *Volga* wreck was lent from the Quetta Memorial Cathedral for the occasion, and in the afternoon

the Bishop baptized three babies, Gaysha Alfred, Nappio, and Elsie. At 7.30 we had Evensong and the Bishop gave an Advent sermon on the words 'Thy Kingdom come.' The village slept in peace until about 1 A.M. on Monday, when dancing was begun very vigorously and kept up till 5.30 A.M. It would probably be resumed at short intervals all Monday and Tuesday by day and night until all the supplies ran out, and the five hundred visitors would then disperse to their various islands and the people of Moa resume their usual workaday life. At 7 A.M. on Monday our party from Thursday Island were on board the *Goodwill* for the return journey. We had a splendid trip and landed safely about 3 P.M., having all thoroughly enjoyed the share we took in the opening of St. Paul's at Moa."

It may be interesting to compare with the above an account of the same event written by Andai, a small Moa schoolboy:

"When the notice was given out to all the island that the Church of St. Paul, Moa, was to be opened on November 30 all the cutters came from all the islands on November 28, and there were houses made for all the people. There were four houses made, one for the South Sea people, and the other three for the tribes of Mobiag and Badu, but when the people came from the other islands they were divided into three, and some gentlemen came on the *Goodwill*, and there was great feasting.

"When the bell went on Sunday morning for to open the church, all the strangers from all the islands made a line from Mr. Cole's house and right round the church in two lines, but there was a space in the middle and the people of St. Paul's went through the middle. All the boys wore the same kind of *lava-lavas* and singlets, and the women and girls wore white dresses. They had red

ribbon on their head, and we, St. Paul's people, sang a hymn, 'Onward, Christian Soldiers, marching as to war, with the cross of Jesus going on before,' and our big boy wore a white dress like a quire, and he bore the cross before us. His name is Gayai, and when we went in, then the Bishop and our Missionary Mr. Cole went in, and there were hymns sung and the Bible read, and in the end we sang hymns and the collections was made. A head-man from every island comes and stands near the Bishop and Mr. Cole. He has a little basket in his hand. The people put their money in the basket and go out on the other door, and when all the people from the other islands had finished then we had some more prayers made and then we children came out and the Bishop gave the ladies and gentlemen, and the men and women of St. Paul's the Holy Communion, and after that the service ended.

"On the next morning, on Monday morning there was a great play in the village. We danced on the very hot day and were very happy, and there was capamoury made of turtle and flour, about five or six turtle, and in the night we danced and there were paper lamps hanged all around. The Yam Island boys their play was about spears. The Cocoanut Islanders their play was about shovels. The Mobiag boys their play was about a parrot. Their hats were made like a parrot's head, and when they moved the heads it looked like a parrot's head moved, and in the next morning they sailed away to their own places and the yams that were left behind the Councillors shared it out for them, and only the Mobiag people stopped, and then they went away on the next morning, and we were very sorry to see our friends go away.—'ANDAI.'"

It was a great blow to the Mission when Deaconess Buchanan was obliged by ill-health to give up the work which she had so wonderfully inspired, and her absence

CHAPTER XVII

TORRES STRAIT ISLANDS (1915)

In 1914 the London Missionary Society asked me, on behalf of the Church of England, to take over the Mission work which they had been doing so well for fifty years in the Torres Strait as they wished to concentrate their efforts on New Guinea. After taking time to consider the proposal I agreed to it, and in April 1915 I made a preliminary voyage round the Islands to establish the new regime. We were greatly assisted by the Rev. F. Walker, late of the London Missionary Society, whose knowledge of the natives and goodwill were of incalculable value to us. I left Thursday Island at 7.15 A.M. on Wednesday, April 14, in the *Goodwill*, with the Rev. F. Walker (her master), the Rev. E. J. Nash, the Rev. J. Jones, and Miss Quinan. There was a fresh breeze, and two of our party soon fell victims, for the boat rolled badly, being light. We made a good passage and arrived at St. Paul's, Moa, at 12.15 P.M. We were met by the whole population, who were enthusiastic in their welcome of Mr. Jones. Mr. Jones was much impressed by the wonderful growth of the settlement since it was founded in 1908, and by the good buildings and the order and contentment everywhere visible. Immediately after dinner, which was rather late, I baptized three children; and after the baptisms, Mr. Jones examined the children in the school, the answers being excellent. After this the great event was the wedding of Bana and Dinah. Mr. Jones gave away the bride, and though I am not able to describe the ceremony in proper journalese, it

A NATIVE DRUMMER OF THE TORRES STRAITS ISLANDS PREPARED FOR A DANCE

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was evidently a success. In the evening five candidates were confirmed. The church had been decorated, and looked very well. After service Mr. Nash and I returned on board the *Goodwill*, Mr. Jones staying on shore for the night. I had arranged for a celebration of Holy Communion at 7 A.M., and so was up early, and we landed at 6.30 A.M., to find the whole community wrapped in slumber after the exertions of the previous day. The bell quickly woke them, and there was soon a procession of men and women, in their best, wending their way to the church. Mr. Jones explained that he had spent the night till about 5 A.M. in wrestling with an inquiring and aggressive goat, which apparently wanted to spend the night in his room! The celebration of Holy Communion, with about thirty communicants, was very happy, and brought back many memories of the start and progress of the Mission. After service we bade good-bye to many friends, and leaving Miss Quinan to take Mr. Cole's place, while he and Mrs. Cole went for their holiday, we went on board to breakfast, sailing at 9 A.M. It was blowing hard, and we all fell more or less victims to the sea; at any rate we were very glad to lie down on the hatch, and hope for better days.

After a rather miserable day and much heavy rolling we arrived at Yam Island at 4 P.M. and at once went ashore, and after greeting the people, who were waiting dressed in their best, we all adjourned to the church, where we had a hearty service. Immediately after the service all the men adjourned to the schoolroom, and we had an interesting conversation about the change of ecclesiastical administration, and reassured the people on some points about which they were anxious. They wanted a church bell, and were quite ready to provide the cost, as also some small repairs to the church. The singing was very hearty, and we parted feeling that much had been done to remove misunderstandings.

Mrs. Smallwood, the Government teacher, kindly

asked us to dinner, and we went on board again, leaving at 9 P.M. It was a very bad night, with squalls of rain and strong headwind, against which we made slow progress, only reaching our anchorage under Dungeness Island at 1 A.M., and having to anchor in fifteen fathoms of water.

The weather was but very little better when we left again in the morning after an uneasy night, and we still rolled heavily. We made very slow progress all day, and did not anchor off the beach at Massig until 5 P.M. We landed at once, and walked over a mile through the bush to the village, which is on the south-east side of the island. We passed many gardens, which seemed to be doing fairly well, though wanting rain. Here again we repeated the programme of Yam. We were specially pleased with the singing. After a short visit to the Government teacher we again went on board; and I must confess that I was completely tired out. The church is very resonant, and is under a coco-nut grove. There was a strong wind and the crying of several babies to contend with; however I got through all right, but very tired with the four days' constant work and travelling. We had a good quiet night on board, and left at 8 A.M. At last, for the first time wind and sea were merciful, and we made a good passage to Darnley, arriving at midday. The island is high and picturesque, and the lower slopes are well cultivated. The anchorage is a poor one, and much exposed. We landed after dinner, and transferred our belongings to an empty house ashore. I must confess that for myself it was an immense pleasure to sit ashore in the shelter of a room on a chair at table, and to look out over the reef to the foam-capped waves and listen to the wail of the freshening wind from the security of the land. I love the sea very much—from the land.

Afterwards we walked down to the village, which is scattered along several little bays and buried in coco-nut

groves. Here my services were requisitioned to find out what had become of the water which supplied the well, which had recently run dry. I diagnosed that part at least of the supply had become diverted to the right, about twenty-five feet from the well, and suggested for the present distress the digging of another well above the point of divergence. In the evening we had a meeting of the men, the greater part of whom were away on the boats. Those left were chiefly the older men.

Early next morning we had a quiet little celebration of Holy Communion for our own party in the Mission house, and at 10 A.M. a big service in the church. The whole island must have been present, and the singing was most hearty. I preached, and the people were most attentive. All the people were in their best, and there were many most intelligent faces. Before service I took the children for religious instruction. The white church, the green palm-trees, the purple reef, and the blue sea beyond made a most beautiful picture.

Next day we were up at 5.30 A.M. and off by 7 A.M. The wind was due ahead, but was fortunately moderate, and we made a good passage with the engines alone, arriving at Murray Island at 1 P.M. As we neared the island we passed through innumerable reefs. The islands are three in number, and evidently volcanic. They mark the northern end of the Great Barrier Reef, which lies some miles to the westward, and rise up boldly to the height of 600 and 750 feet. We anchored on the edge of the shore reef, dropping anchor in seven fathoms of water; a short distance farther in there was one fathom, while under our stern there were fourteen fathoms.

After being welcomed by the people and hospitably lodged by Mr. Bruce, who has been Government teacher for twenty-five years, and has an extraordinary knowledge of the native character and customs, and arranging for a meeting with the men at 5 P.M., we set out under

the guidance of two of the Councillors for a walk round the island. There is a good road five miles long round the greater part of the island, and we followed all the way through the miles of gardens and shade trees. It was a scene of enchanting beauty, and I had no idea that there was anything like it in Queensland. It reminded me more of Ceylon or the Philippine Islands, but had the additional beauty of the half-mile wide reef surrounding the island with its endless walls, built in immemorial times of the past for fish-traps, and the sea with its countless reefs rising out of forty or fifty fathoms of water away to the Barrier. About half-way round halt was called, and a boy of our following was sent up a coco-nut tree to fetch down some nuts, which provided us with a refreshing drink. On the southern side of the island the volcanic formation is very obvious.

We got back in time for the meeting of men, and I gave an address and made arrangements for the next day. An interesting evening with Mr. Bruce brought a busy day to a close.

Next morning there were 150 people out of a total population of 420 at church at 7 A.M. I wondered in what white parish the same proportion would attend, especially when we remember that some live two or three miles from the church. This week-day service is held regularly twice a week. I conducted the service and preached. The people were very attentive, but the singing was inferior to that of Darnley. The church is a fine concrete building, much more ecclesiastical-looking than most. Our brief spell of fine weather seemed, alas, to be over; for this morning it was raining, and looked as if it meant to continue, while it was evidently blowing hard at sea, and we were glad of the shelter of the hill. After breakfast we met the native church officials, and discussed a large number of cases of discipline, as many wished to be readmitted to church membership. Out of twenty-five cases, there were

thirteen of quarrelling, three of attending forbidden dances, four of drunkenness, and five of immorality. As we could hardly receive the penitents into a church which was as yet only Anglican in name, I asked Mr. Walker to receive in their accustomed manner those guilty of the lesser offences, while those who had sinned more seriously were put on probation until the arrival of our first missionary. It is only fair to say that the offences dated over the last seven or eight years, and that none were more recent than twelve months. In the afternoon I was kept busy with nine baptisms and four weddings. The children were very good, except one of about eighteen months old, who suddenly realized that I was white, and rent the air with convulsive yells. No pen of mine is sufficient to describe the weddings. The four brides and their bridesmaids were adorned with a profusion of ribbons of red and the most brilliant of all greens. To get all the brides and bridesmaids, the grooms and best men in the right places was only possible by the organizing genius of Mr. Nash, and finally the right couples were duly united, Mr. Nash giving a very practical and helpful address. After the weddings I walked out to the other end of the island at the request of Mr. Bruce to try to find water, and was able to recommend a spot where there was a fair, though not large, flow of the indispensable fluid, which the women and girls have now to carry two or more miles.

We were off at daylight next morning (Wednesday, April 21) and cherished ambitions of reaching Saibai, a hundred miles away, by moonlight, but when we got to the passage of the Warrior Reef, sixty miles, about 4.30 P.M., we found that the sun was shining right down the passage, and that it was impossible to go through, as it is full of dangerous patches. There was nothing for it but to turn round and make our way back to Dalrymple Island, seven or eight miles away to the right. It was dark when we reached the island, and anchoring

proved a ticklish business. The reef shelves from above low-water level to eighteen fathoms in the space of a few yards, and the only way is to drop the anchor on the edge of the reef and swing off into deep water, a difficult feat in the dark, but safely accomplished. We sailed at 3 A.M., and by daylight sighted our old friend Dungeness, and an hour or two later passed through the reef by the large passage between Dungeness and Warrior Island, where once had lived the famous tribe of warriors who attacked a British gunboat in their canoes. Soon after, the engine broke down and we had to rely on our sails until we were near Douan. We anchored at Saibai at 3.15 P.M., and immediately went on shore. We were met by the people with the news of several marriages, so there seemed to be no time to be lost. We went straight to the church and held service, at which I gave an address on the proposed changes, and afterwards held a meeting for the men. As elsewhere, I explained that the deacons would have to become wardens, which did not seem to disturb them. One of them made a very nice little speech of welcome—short, emphatic, and to the point. After the meeting came the weddings, three young couples, simply dressed, and without best men or bridesmaids. I was just congratulating myself that I had got through my labours when a fourth couple, an elderly policeman and a widow, turned up and pleaded not to be overlooked. The bridegroom said he did not know his own age, and when asked for that of the bride, declared that it was the same as his own. A short walk and tea brought us on to eight o'clock, when the deacons arrived, and I talked to them for an hour, when we parted very good friends. After a short visit to the wedding festivities, we got on board before 10 P.M., after a very busy afternoon.

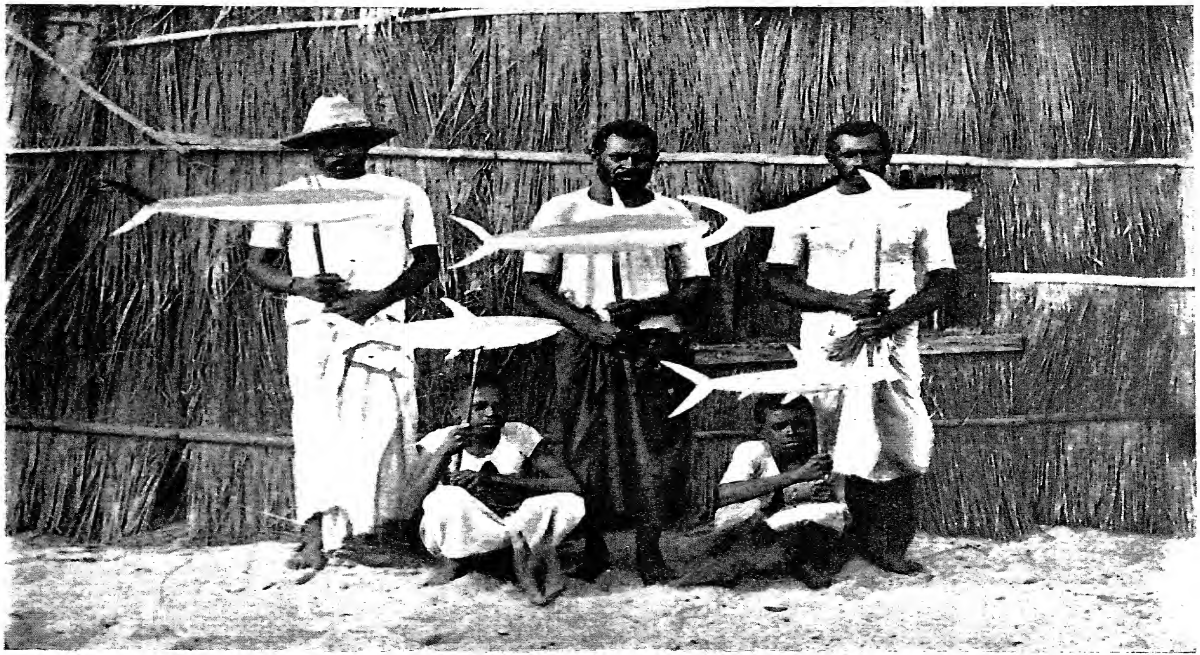
We left Saibai early on the morning of April 23, and had a splendid run of forty miles to Maubiag with all sail set. We passed over several large shoals, and went

through the Maubiag Reef by the narrowest passage that it was possible to conceive. It was not even straight, and in several places there could not have been more than a foot or eighteen inches to spare on each side of the ship. We landed about 2 P.M. and made our way to the village, escorted by a large number of men. The new concrete church is a really handsome building, about seventy feet long, and very lofty. The roof, which is to be of red tiles, is not yet erected (though all the materials are to hand), as the natives thought they were not equal to the work of erecting it by themselves.

We had the usual services, including four baptisms and a most interesting meeting with the men, getting back on board soon after 6 P.M. After tea I had a talk with the two deacons, and explained to them that they were to be churchwardens in the future. We left Maubiag at 2 A.M. and had a violent head-wind and rough sea, but by the help of our engine we managed to make steady if slow way against it, and arrived at Moa about 8.30 A.M. We were very glad to get in under the shelter of the reef after the bucketing outside. We went ashore, and found Miss Quinan very well, and getting on happily with the people. We were unable to stay more than an hour on shore, to our regret; but other work had to be done, and we were off again about 11 A.M. The people came down to the water's edge, and waved to us until we were far away. I felt sad to be parting with my Moa friends for good. We retraced our course round the north-eastern part of the island, and now with a fair wind, and about 1 P.M. arrived at Adam, a picturesque little village, with a new concrete church. On landing we found that most of the men were away, and arranged for the people to come over to Badu for the Sunday services; then the anchor was raised, and a short run across the Strait brought us to Badu and Mr. Walker's hospitable station at Dogai.

It was an immense refreshment to get a bath and sit in a civilized house again after ten or twelve days of the crowded cabin of the *Goodwill.*

Next day, Sunday, April 25, we had a quiet celebration at Dogai at 7 A.M., and Morning Prayer in the village church a mile away at 10 A.M. The church was crowded, more than half the congregation being men. The singing was excellent. After service I had a very satisfactory meeting with the men in the Mission house. This was the last island, and in every one I had met the people, and in every case they had professed themselves ready to welcome the Church and its work. As one of the Saibai men expressed it: "We are like children who have lost their father and mother. We do not know what to do or where to look. You will be our father and show us the way to go and how to live. We thank you." One man came to me to inquire anxiously whether I would continue him in his office, which he had held continuously for over forty years. He was the official church awakener, and had an ancient black rod with a silver top, with which he went round and prodded any member of the congregation who fell asleep under the sometimes very long-winded exhortations of the native deacons. "Sometimes," the people complained, "decona preach so long he break our back!" and because of the official prodder they could not even find escape in sleep. I continued the old worthy in his office, understanding that he had become somewhat old and no longer terrible. There is a flourishing temperance society among the men, with sixty members. In the afternoon about forty adults, together with a number of children, assembled at Dogai for a Bible class, which is usually conducted by Mrs. Zahel. This was taken by Mr. Nash, and the attention of the men was admirable. After the class I walked up the hill behind the station, and had a most magnificent view over the islands in every direction. The only view I know to compare



NATIVES OF BADU ISLAND WITH HOME-MADE "PROPERTIES" FOR THEIR FISH DANCE

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with it is that from Cape Misenum, which protected the old Roman naval station near Baiae, and served as a look-out post. The Badu view is, however, both more beautiful and more extensive. There was a crowded congregation again at night, and Mr. Jones preached. We left Badu next morning about 10 A.M., after many farewells, and arrived back at Thursday Island at 4 P.M., after a most deeply interesting time.

We owed a great debt of gratitude to the Rev. F. Walker, not only for lending us the *Goodwill* and for his constant care for our comfort on board, but for the invaluable assistance he gave us in helping to reconcile the natives to the changes in ecclesiastical matters, and by giving us the benefit of his great experience of the Strait and of the native mind. The Mission has been since strengthened by the arrival of three clergy, one of whom is now stationed at Moa, one at Darnley, and the other at Maubiag. The work has prospered rapidly and is most promising.

CHAPTER XVIII

SOME NORTHERN PIONEERS (1885–1915)

It is right, I suppose, to begin with those representatives of the King who have either had the North under administration or visited it from time to time. Of these, four stand out in my recollection. First, the bluff, rugged personality of Sir William MacGregor, who was first Administrator of New Guinea, and afterwards Governor of Queensland. He combined an extraordinary strength, courage, and adventurousness which carried him with half a dozen guards into the midst of the wildest cannibals in search of a murderer, with the most colossal learning and encyclopædic knowledge. His tables were spread with scientific pamphlets in half a dozen languages, and he read his Greek Testament more diligently than nine-tenths of the clergy. He spoke the broadest Scotch and I remember the puzzlement of the children of a little mission school when he told them to write down at his dictation what sounded to them like "A cart sat on a mart."

Sir William MacGregor was followed in New Guinea by Sir George Le Hunte, also a man of great capacity, vigour, and character. He became Governor of South Australia in later years, and is remembered with affection and esteem.

Lord Beauchamp, who had just completed his term as Governor of New South Wales, was, with Sir G. Le Hunte, present at my enthronement at Thursday Island, or rather they intended to be, but their boat was late, and as it was not signalled the service began and they only

arrived at its conclusion. It would be impertinent on my part to speak of the high ideals which Lord Beauchamp brought to Australia, or the generosity with which he assisted the Diocese of Carpentaria, as he did every good work. Perhaps he will forgive me if I relate an amusing experience of my own. Some little while before he left New South Wales, a great turmoil arose out of the fact that Lord Beauchamp, who was a devout member of the Anglican Church, thought it his duty to attend, as Governor, the opening of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Cathedral in Sydney. The preacher published as part of his sermon certain offensive remarks which he had omitted in the actual preaching, and the public jumped to the conclusion that these remarks had been delivered in the presence of the Governor. Hence much turmoil and excitement. A few days later I was going by train from Sydney northward, and was travelling in a coupé carriage which held four, the other corner being occupied by a young man. At Strathfield, two hundred women were waiting on the platform on their way to some convention in Newcastle. Four big stout women hoisted themselves into the carriage; one sat down on the young man in the corner and I saw him no more, and the others disposed themselves as best they could. Presently they began to discuss the all-absorbing topic of the Governor and St. Mary's. "Pore young man," said one good dame, "we must not be too hard on him. You see he is only half my age, and has only half my experience of life. As for them Romans, they're allus the same, ever since St. Paul told them they was a wild olive-tree. Howsomedever, next time he will know better. If you put your head into lionses and tigerses mouths, they'll bite."

The present Viceroy of India, Lord Chelmsford, paid more than one visit to Thursday Island when he was Governor of Queensland, and, it is needless to say, won the hearts of all by the simplicity and charm of his

manners and his quiet camaraderie. During his stay he was to dine one night at the officers' mess and we waited long in vain. At last he turned up on foot, assisting Mr. Milman, the Government Resident, who was no mean weight, wet through with dirty water and overcome with indignation. The local cabman, *alias* carter and milkman, had overturned his cab and pitched out its occupants into a wet ditch. The future Viceroy had the good fortune to fall on top, and took his adventure with the greatest cheerfulness.

My first memory of Thursday Island is connected with the Government Resident, the Hon. John Douglas, C.M.G., a man of remarkable personality and appearance. His huge leonine head was crowned with a mass of snow-white hair, and he attracted general attention in any assembly. He was at one time Premier of Queensland, but an unwise act compelled his retirement, and he spent his declining years at Thursday Island, beloved by all who knew him, and adored by all the natives of the islands for a hundred miles round. A gentleman in the truest sense of the term, he was also a man of wide reading and refinement. He died in July 1904, after a week's illness, still at work, but glad to lay it down and rest.

He was succeeded by Mr. Hugh Milman, another man of marked individuality, a nephew of the well-known Dean, and brother of a late Missionary Bishop. A somewhat gruff exterior clothed a very tender heart, and he did good and faithful service to the time of his death in September 1912.

The island was extremely fortunate in obtaining as its third Resident Mr. W. Lee Bryce, a man of great tact and ability, whose keen interest in and able treatment of the native population of the surrounding islands has led to many reforms and the initiation of many changes which his older predecessors could hardly have been expected to undertake. He too died

suddenly of fever not long after I left Thursday Island.

One of the best known and most widely popular men of his day in the North of Queensland was George Henry Stanton, Bishop of North Queensland from 1877 to 1891. Bishop Stanton came out to Australia in middle life, with no knowledge of rough bush life, and only the experience of a London parish. He threw himself into his new experiences with extraordinary gusto. He immediately set to work to learn to ride and to swim, and he won the hearts of the dwellers in the bush by his wonderful geniality and his deep and intelligent interest in their occupations. He was at the same time a man of great intellectual power, and he always kept fully abreast of the latest scientific and philosophical thought. He had, however, the gift of translating these things into the simplest language, and illustrating them with a wealth of imagery drawn from his hearers' own observation and experience. His sermons were at once intellectually stimulating and extraordinarily fresh and vivid. He was one of the humblest of men, and most abstemious and self-denying. His private income was all devoted to his work, and no one knew the limits of his generosity. His modesty was sometimes very trying, as when he would insist on carrying his own bag while you walked empty-handed beside him, or as when, having to share a room with him, I found him ensconced on the mattress on the floor intended for me, and apparently fast asleep, while the comfortable bed had been left for his embarrassed young chaplain.

Few perhaps realized the depth of the spiritual life that flowed under the somewhat jesting and critical surface of his ever-ready words, and even I, who thought I knew him so well, did not realize, until I visited him at Newcastle just before his death, how lofty was the secret ideal which he jealously screened from prying eyes. He had a thousand quaint stories to tell of his bush

experiences, and I fancy that he found the respectability of Newcastle somewhat dull after his northern diocese. His charity of soul was so great that while it attracted good men it was also sometimes taken advantage of by the bad, and one or two very weird specimens of clergy made their way into his diocese. It is, however, not a little remarkable that out of a little diocese containing twenty clergy no less than three—the Revs. C. G. Barlow, E. A. Anderson, and G. White—became bishops, and two archdeacons—the Revs. F. Tucker and Seymour.

The Rev. C. G. Barlow succeeded him as Bishop of North Queensland and afterwards became Bishop of Goulburn. He, too, was a remarkable man, but failed to become a great man through lack of early education and training. Unfortunately, he elected as a boy to follow Bishop Stanton to Australia instead of going to the University as he had intended. Had he followed out his original intention he might, I think, have developed remarkably. He had a most marvellously magnetic personality and great gifts of character reading and observation, combined with a most fervid Celtic eloquence, but he wanted those gifts of decision which were required to make his gifts fully effective, and his lack of early training made him diffident in speaking of matters outside his own sphere of observation. In spite of his drawbacks, he did a great work, at a great cost to himself, for his delicate sensitive nature felt every little trouble and anxiety with undue keenness, and he was apt to require of his friends, not only the affection which was always his, but a community of thought which was not always possible and the absence of which gave him pain. Like Bishop Stanton, he was often misjudged by those who did not know him well, or realize the high ideals, the keen self-criticism, and the unfailing sympathy for the sorrows of his fellow-men which always distinguished him. He paid the penalty

of a highly sensitive nature in a nervous breakdown which hastened his death.

In the early days of the Church in North Queensland we were fortunate in having many laymen, pioneers chiefly of the pastoral industry, who helped to lay the foundations of the Church. Of such were William Hann and Walter Hays, who contributed generously to the building of the cathedral in Townsville, and Mr. R. Christison. The latter was one of the best type of pioneers. He swam his horses ashore near Bowen, went up country, and for many years fought with all the troubles of the land until at last, like the patriarchs of old, he was blessed with many flocks and herds. He had a simple faith in God, and having in his pioneer days vowed that if God would bless him he would make an offering of a tenth part, he remembered and performed his vow when wealth came.

But the pioneers of the North were of all sorts and kinds, and many of them not respectable like the dignified gentlemen I have been describing.

I was riding one day through the bush when I heard a distant shout of "Dinner!" I looked about, and on the repetition of the shout I saw an old bushman waving his arm, and evidently inviting me to share his meal of very ancient salt beef, damper, and inky black tea. His manners were polite, though his dress was dirty and his person neglected. His talk, however, was not of the bush, but of literature and philosophy, and he quoted freely from Greek authors in their own tongue. Who he was and how he came there I never discovered. When I was at Herberton the community was greatly taken with a fascinating gentleman, who arrived from England in search of rest, a good climate, and pleasant companionship, all of which he found to perfection in Herberton. He was accompanied by his son, an enormously fat boy, and was voted a great acquisition until the arrival of an English policeman, who invited

him to return to England on the charge of having left with some thousands of his employer's money. Curiously enough, it was through the fat boy that he was discovered.

All our mysterious English visitors were not of one sex. I knew well a delightful old lady who lived in a tiny North Queensland township, on a pension received from her family, a very well-known and distinguished one. While her strength lasted she used to take long walks of ten to fifteen miles through the bush, and when she died her friends caused a tombstone to be erected over her grave. No one ever knew why she went into voluntary exile. A more mysterious case was that of the lady known as Annie Bags, from her fancy for attiring herself in old flour-bags. She used to wander through the bush accompanied by a pack of mangy mongrel dogs, and often lived with the blacks, who respected her as being obviously mad. She spoke with the accent of a highly educated woman, and I have heard her play the piano most beautifully. She was more than once arrested by the police on the charge of being without visible means of support, but she escaped by showing that she had several hundred pounds in the savings bank, and was allowed to return to her strange method of life.

The mass of the pioneers were, however, hard-working and right-living men and women, and it is a life which involves much hardship and needs considerable courage.

The stockman rides from daylight to dark, lives on beef and damper and tea, and sleeps usually under a tree. The "cocky" farmer has to work from daylight till after dark in his battle against floods, droughts, cockatoos, grasshoppers, and locusts, to say nothing of bandicoots and wallabies. The miner works shorter hours, but finds it difficult to get fresh food, and has to be content with very poor water, while gold, which is worth at the utmost £4 an ounce, costs on the average

about £5 to win. Yet the miner is of all men the most hopeful. His show is always going to be the brilliant exception which is to bring him wealth and happiness for his declining years.

It is, perhaps, the bushwoman who has the greatest claim on our sympathy and admiration. Bush life is hard for a man, but far harder for a woman, yet wherever one goes, save only in Central Australia, one finds women accompanying their husbands and sharing in their toils. It is no uncommon thing to find women who have spent ten or twenty years on the roads as the wives of carriers, accompanied perhaps by half a dozen children, whose only home is the tail-board of the wagon and whose only bed is a cot slung underneath it. On stations, in mining camps, in bush clearings, they are doing a splendid work in preventing the men from sinking to the primitive level of their surroundings, and introducing elements of stability and hope.

Of those with whom I have been more or less brought in touch in the course of their efforts to help either the coloured or the white inhabitants of the North, four stand out prominently in my mind—James Chalmers, Albert Maclaren, Florence Buchanan, and William Wilkinson. Chalmers I met at Thursday Island, shortly before his murder. His life is so well known that I need not refer to it. He was not without his faults, but for manly Christian courage and heroic devotion to duty he would be hard to beat. Albert Maclaren I never met, though we were often on the point of meeting.

The late Deaconess Buchanan was one of those rare and beautiful souls who seem lent to earth for a short time till they can no longer be spared from their higher tasks in a higher sphere. In look and character she reminded me irresistibly of St. Catherine of Genoa, as depicted by Baron Von Hügel in his "Mystical Element of Religion." There was the same frail body compelled

to obedience by the imperious soul, but revenging itself by occasional fits of utter prostration, the same life of constant unremitting service of the sick and suffering, the same sturdy independence of character which made Catherine dispense with a spiritual director for the greater part of her life, the same extraordinary influence on those who surrounded her, the same teaching by conversation and example rather than by formal address or written statement. She was extraordinarily abstemious. One small cup of tea and one slice of dry toast was her usual meal. It is almost incredible that any human being, however slight, as she was, could support life on so little. Her labour was almost incessant. In vain did one try to check the over-exhaustion of her powers. With gentle but invincible obstinacy she persisted in giving herself to her self-imposed tasks, spending herself and her means entirely on her work. All who came within reach of her influence became her devoted slaves, and were ready and willing to do anything for her. Pilots and seamen, wharf labourers and draymen, high officials and heedless girls, overburdened and sometimes short-tempered mothers, children of all ages, Japanese, South Sea Islanders, and men of every nationality, all found in her some one to love and trust, some one who seemed in each individual case to regard them with special care and affection, and who remembered the special occasions and anniversaries of their lives. At the same time she had a robust intelligence which saw through all attempts at fraud or imposition, and enabled her to form a cool judgment, combined with a keen and unquenchable sense of humour. She would smile without a trace of malice at the exasperating weakness and follies of those among whom she worked, and at her own pains and sufferings. As with St. Francis, the eager soul would deride the slowness and incapacity of "brother body," and then smile at itself for its impatience. It was impossible to be in

her company without being drawn to her. The mobile, pain-drawn face, the great spiritual eyes, the frail little body dressed in the plainest uniform, were some of the outward marks of the tremendous energy, unconquerable will, and ever-present purpose within. It was imposible not to feel that her life was dominated by a supreme purpose. "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" was the never expressed, but always present, response to every effort to induce her to spare herself. In the midst of her work she passed through the gate of a time of special suffering into the higher life with the words "It is good to suffer" on her lips.

The last of the four, the Rev. William Wilkinson, is happily still alive and is hard at work as ever. He is well known to every miner and bushman in the Cape York Peninsula, the Gulf country, and the Northern Territory. With no home save a little iron room, on one side of which he keeps saddlery and bags of chaff, and on the other a few books, he rides ever from daylight to dark through the most remote bush districts, where no other minister of religion ever goes, hunting up every man, wherever he is to be found, even if it means a day's journey off the track, and striving, with an unobtrusive kindliness which is never capable of being mistaken for officiousness, to do him service. Many years ago the *Sydney Bulletin*, which is not given to flattering the clergy, published an amusing and sympathetic account of his work, relating that its correspondent was standing at the door of the hotel of a remote bush town when he saw an elderly bushman rounding up a string of pack-horses into the yard with exceptional skill. On his coming up to the hotel, he put him down for a surveyor, and cheerfully asked him to have a drink. The drink was declined, and he was further disconcerted by having a mysterious engine pointed at him (Mr. Wilkinson is deaf), and by being asked a series of pertinent and slightly disconcerting

questions as to himself and his business. He concluded that the *Sydney Bulletin* ideal of the country parson did not always conform to the facts.

Mr. Wilkinson's duties as he travels from point to point, with his mob of perhaps a dozen horses, packed with feed (which is often unattainable in the dry season), books, slides, and even a big acetylene lantern, are many and various. He carries mails and parcels to distant parishioners in "the Never Never," he gives not only spiritual advice, but information as to the prospects of one-man mining shows that no one else ever heard of, news of friends and relatives, writes letters, gathers the children to teaching and baptism, makes wills, takes charge of the fossicker's tiny packet of gold, which represents six months' supply of flour and tobacco, and generally goes about "doing good" to every man he can find. Of course he has his troubles: once a pack-horse rolled on £10 worth of lantern slides; another was seized by an alligator; another, into whose eye he was putting some healing drops, rose up and smote him down, and then trampled on his head, so that for a week he lay between life and death. A week later he crawled into the saddle and continued his way.

Mr. Wilkinson is not altogether an easy person to live up to. I well remember my first trip up the Peninsula with him. We started from a little bush township where I had arrived the night before. Mr. Wilkinson was up before daylight looking after his horses and adjusting the weights of the many pack-bags. I did not offer to help, for long practice had given him an exactitude that no outsider could rival, and to offer to help an expert is unwise presumption. About 12.30 P.M. all was at last finished and the horses got away in charge of a black boy. "Just time for lunch at the hotel before we leave," I thought, but no such luck; we must leave at once or we should not reach our camping-ground before dark. On our arrival the horses

A NATIVE CANOE, TORRES STRAITS

DARNLEY ISLAND, TORRES STRAITS

claimed the first care and we got our delayed lunch at 8.15 P.M. Next morning was a repetition of the last, save that the horses got away earlier, while we stayed, as was indeed right and proper, to have Morning Prayer without the least jot of those skippings and abbreviations which, it is to be feared, less conscientious priests sometimes indulge in. The last member of the Royal Family duly prayed for, we got on the way again, and about 1 P.M. I was meditating a mild inquiry as to dinner when Mr. Wilkinson turned round and said, "No dinner to-day," and devoted himself again to the track. We got dinner, salt beef and damper, with a pot of jam added as a special concession to my weakness, at 8 P.M. Next day I began to get desperate. After all, I thought, I am his bishop and he is bound to obey his ordinary in all things lawful and honest. I will have some dinner to-day even if I have to appeal to his oath of canonical obedience.

Happily it was not put to the test, for a station turned up about noon, and we were graciously allowed two hours, as Mr. Wilkinson wanted to call on the manager and men. I don't know what he lives on when he is not travelling with luxurious and dinner-requiring bishops. The total income derived from his living (?) does not cover horseshoes and horse-feed; but he has been doing it for ten years without getting into debt or being unable to buy new horses as the old ones die from snake-bite, overwork, or old age. He says it is God's providence, and I believe he is right.

Note. Since the above was written Mr. Wilkinson's health has compelled him to transfer his sphere of labour to South Australia, where he is still engaged in Bush Mission work.

CHAPTER XIX

THE PHILIPPINES (1913)

I HAD long been interested in the Philippine Islands, and early in 1913 I was able to visit the islands in response to an invitation from Bishop Brent, the well-known American Bishop of the Philippines, to accompany him on a visit to the Igorots of the Northern Luzon Mountains, among whom he had established a Mission.

I left Thursday Island in the *Kumano Maru* on Thursday, January 30. From the start we had beautiful weather, cool and somewhat cloudy; and as there were only about twenty passengers we had plenty of room. On Sunday we had a well-attended service in the music saloon and managed the hymns very well. We passed a number of islands, some of them active volcanoes, but none nearer than fifteen miles except Ceram, which we passed after dusk. We were only a short distance from the land and saw the lighthouse and lights very clearly. On Wednesday morning we sighted the first of the long series of Philippine Islands extending for 800 miles in length and about 150 in breadth. This was Basilan, an island about the size of Prince of Wales Island, and somewhat resembling it in appearance. Passing close to its point, we crossed the Strait to Zamboanga, a small town with red-roofed houses at the foot of a range about two thousand feet high, and the southern point of the island of Mindanao. We steamed to within a few hundred yards of the jetty before turning at right angles along the coast. The position of the town reminded me strongly of Cairns, but every yard of the beach for miles was

covered with coco-nut trees. There were a number of small fishing vessels with curious striped square sails and small outriggers. The steamer passes for six or seven miles close to the shore, giving one a beautiful view of the plantations and the hills that rise behind. A few miles farther on we left the island and struck once more for the open sea. All next day we ran along the coast of the islands, getting some beautiful views. One especially dwells with me, off the coast of Mindoro: a sea smooth as polished steel, a couple of green islets, and, behind, a crumpled mass of tangled, reddish hills, every fold and shadow standing out clear and sharp in the light of the setting sun. Behind, higher hills, half hidden and melting into masses of fleecy cloud, on which a rainbow played like the colours of mother-of-pearl; on the right a great mountain over seven thousand feet high, and on the left yet another as high and wrapped in clouds. In the west, the sun, a glowing heart of ruby fire, sank behind a level plain of old red-gold, which covered the face of the water from within a few yards of the ship into an apparently infinite distance; as the sun disappeared the old gold changed to crimson and wrinkled under a breath of air into ten thousand eddies and pools of light. When the breeze sank again the sea became one half purple and the other pale chrome-yellow; while from where the sun had disappeared shot up great streamers of rosy light far up into the over-sky. At daylight next morning we arrived at Manila.

Manila Harbour reminded me a great deal of Colombo, and was full of shipping. I landed about 9 A.M., and was met by Bishop Brent and also by Bishop McKim of Tokyo, whom I met at the time of the Lambeth Conference. It was strange that we two were the first episcopal visitors Bishop Brent had ever had, and we both arrived from different directions on successive days. The Bishop took us round the town, which is very interesting, and the most crowded with carriages and

light-cart traffic, I should think, of any city in the world. Every one, down to the poorest, seems to drive something. We visited a hospital with over fifty beds, supported by the American Church, with a Deaconesses' Home and other Mission buildings, all in beautiful order. The Bishop has a delightful concrete house, built for the tropics, and I was shown my room when I should return to occupy it. I was delighted to note the bed on the veranda. On one side is the Cathedral, a very fine concrete building built in the style of the old Spanish cathedrals, and on the other a Church Club and other buildings. In front, a fine open space where the University is to be built.

At lunch we had a most interesting talk about the future of the Philippines. A Bill was already before the United States Congress practically to give them their independence. The future is full of risk, not only to the Philippines, but to Australia as well. Unfortunately Congress (which is like our Commonwealth Government when dealing with the North) knows little about the Philippines, and may commit acts of real absurdity in consequence. In the afternoon we went to a baseball match, and watched two great struggles—the first between the Army and the Navy, and the second between the Philippinos and a Japanese team from Tokyo, in which, to the general surprise, the former won amid a scene of wild excitement among the spectators, who were all agog for nationality, independence, etc. Finding that the Bishop would not be ready to start for a week, I determined to pay a flying visit to Hong-Kong and Canton, but I will not weary the reader with my experiences in these well-known places.

I arrived at Manila from Hong-Kong on Friday, February 14, about five in the afternoon, and after tiresome formalities at the Customs, drove to Bishop Brent's house in the Calle Isaak Peral. Next morning we had a celebration of Holy Communion in Japanese

for the benefit of two Japanese Churchmen. The celebrant was Bishop McKim of Tokyo, who (as I have already stated) was also visiting Manila. After breakfast I went to see the old Cathedral in the walled city, a fine but very plain building, and the Augustinian Church, which has a beautiful cloister enclosing a garden. In the afternoon we heard of the arrest of two Philippinos, Government draughtsmen, who were caught with almost completed plans of the strong American forts at Corregidor Island, which they were supposed to have been making for a foreign Power.

On Sunday morning I preached in the Cathedral at the ordination of the first Chinese deacon for the Chinese congregation of the Episcopal Church in Manila, Mr. T. Pay. The Cathedral is a very large fine building in Spanish style of architecture, a gift from a former member of Bishop Brent's congregation. The Choral Eucharist was beautifully sung, and there was a large and reverent congregation, with a good proportion of communicants. The Cathedral has only been built a few years, but looks a hundred years old. The windows, like those of all the houses in Manila, are of transparent oyster-shells set in wooden frames. They give a soft light, and look like the old-fashioned leaded diamond-pane windows.

On Monday morning the Bishop furnished me with an introduction to the Acting Director of the Bureau of Science, and I spent a most instructive hour going over the fine buildings of the department with the director. The laboratories are large and well equipped, and all kinds of bacteriological experiments are carried on for the Health and Agricultural Departments. Another thing that interested me much was the fish section, where I saw specimens of the hundreds of coloured parrot- and butterfly-fish that haunt the reefs. Everything seems to be done on the most thorough and complete scale.

After saying good-bye to the director, a most courteous American, I went on to the Observatory at the Jesuit College, and presented an introduction to Father Algue, the well-known director, whose labours in the study of typhoons have been of such inestimable value. His system of typhoon detection has been introduced in the United States Navy, and has lately been adapted to the prediction of storms in the North Altantic. Father Algue, a kindly old grey-haired priest, told me that he had received requests for data to assist in the prediction of storms in Australia, but the whole system of storms on the other side of the Equator was different, and warnings from Manila would be of little service. He then handed me over to a young English father, who took me all over the Observatory and explained everything to me in detail. I was specially interested in the earthquake recorders and anemometers. The maximum force of the wind recorded at Manila was one hundred and thirty miles an hour, the monsoon average maximum being only thirty. The clock in the Observatory has been going without a stop for over ten years. It is *in vacuo* and is wound up every ten seconds by electricity.

We left Manila on Wednesday, February 19, at 8 A.M., by train from the Tondo station. The line runs north over a great level plain between the mountains and the sea, covered with an endless succession of rice-fields, now dry and showing only the stubble on which hundreds of carabao were feeding. This is a kind of buffalo which is almost exclusively used for ploughing and for the rough native carts. To the west is the mountain of Merivales, at the entrance to Manila Bay. In the morning paper was an interesting letter from a young Philippino, pointing out the uselessness of the much desired independence to the Philippinos at the present time, partly because they had no money to maintain an army and navy, and without both they could not pro-

tect themselves from foreign aggression; secondly, on account of their lack of education and political experience; and, thirdly, because the various tribes were so bitterly at feud with each other that the withdrawal of the strong hand of the American Government would simply mean internecine domestic strife. These are wise words, but I fear they will not be much heeded. After about forty miles rice was displaced by sugar. The cane was not as large as the Queensland cane, and the method of extraction in the small mills scattered all over the country very primitive. The sugar is made in earthenware jars in a solid lump. The jar is then broken and the sugar sent to Hong-Kong or Japan to be refined. On Mindanao and other islands, however, large central mills are being erected with modern machinery. On the right of the line is a conspicuous extinct volcano, Mount Arayat, rising directly out of the plain to a height of 3300 feet, and many legends centre round it. On the left is a more lofty range of barren hills. The local trains are crowded and the stations filled with gaily dressed crowds, the women all wearing bright dresses, with huge starched muslin sleeves, and the men striped gauze jackets of varied hues. After about another forty miles sugar gives place to the coco-nut trees, which increase in numbers as the line approaches the coast at the mouth of the Bayambang River. One notices all through this country, as well as in Manila, children of three or four smoking cigarettes with inimitable gravity.

At San Fabian the present line towards Baguio branches off to the right towards the huge mountains which tower up to a height of over nine thousand feet. After leaving the coast the coco-nuts are replaced by tobacco, cultivated with great care and in beautiful condition.

Baguio is the Simla of the Philippines, and in February all the Government departments migrate to it for the

summer. At Camp 1 the train was met by eight large motor-cars, each holding fourteen passengers, and with commendable forethought their luggage was sent on ahead in a big baggage-motor. The road, which rises 4500 feet in twenty-two miles, follows the narrow gorge of the Bued, and has been built with wonderful skill and at immense cost. The river has been known to rise in places a hundred feet, and many of the countless bridges have been destroyed more than once. The road runs without parapet along dizzy heights, and winds round curves so sharp that one wonders how the car can ever get round them. There is, however, an excellent system of regulation of traffic, which has to run to schedule time to avoid meeting; every few miles is a bar which is only raised when the section ahead is signalled clear. One or two baggage-cars have had serious accidents, but only one passenger-car. In this case it was the fault of the driver, who was bringing up a number of Chinese and wanted to show how near he could drive to the edge. Fortunately he was himself the only one seriously hurt. The whole twenty-two miles is intensely interesting; the cliffs rise up on either hand to a height of, in some places, 1500 feet, and the hills are covered with trees and extraordinarily varied in form. I do not know any place quite like it. At Camp 6, about ten miles from Camp 1, the road leaves the gorge of the Bued and rises up 1500 feet by a bold zigzag on to the Baguio Plateau, which is 5000 feet above the sea and surrounded by lofty hills. The trees here are all pines, and the air is fresh and nipping. The Governor-General had arrived in the morning, and we passed under arches inscribed "Welcome to our Gov." At the station we were met by the boys of the Bishop's School, who welcomed us in our turn with hearty cheers. We walked with them to the school, situated amid the pine-trees about half a mile away. This school, which is proving a great success, is for the sons of the white residents in the

Philippines, chiefly army men and officials. The school, which has thirty-two boarders, was crowded out, and additional buildings were being erected to accommodate about twenty-five more. A similar school for girls was to be shortly established.

On the following day I called with the Bishop on the Governor-General, Mr. Forbes, in his official residence, a somewhat mean house on a magnificent site, with a view extending over hill and valley for forty miles up to the huge mass of Mount Pulag, which is nearly ten thousand feet high. The conversation turned on the Jones Bill then before the Congress, and it was agreed that premature independence would be most disastrous to the best interests of the natives. The Governor, in common with the other Americans that I have met, expressed much interest in Australia and its problems. The roads are very carefully kept and there are many Igorots working on them. Their national costume is simply a loin-cloth which, as in India, seems clothing enough by itself, but to improve their appearance they add to it a hat and coat, which gives them an extraordinary half-dressed appearance far from beautiful. In the afternoon I drove with the Bishop to the Easter School, a Church school for Igorot children. Over fifty boys and girls live at the school and earn quite a lot of money by weaving. The looms are somewhat primitive, and are made by the boys, but the work is very beautiful.

Next morning I walked to Mirador Observatory, a branch of the Jesuit Observatory at Manila. It is situated on a conical hill a mile or two out of Baguio and commands a most wonderful view. On the west the mountains drop down to the coastal plain and the waters of the Lingayen Gulf, only twenty miles away as the crow flies, but forty by road, and beyond the Pangasinan Peninsula and the China Sea, sixty miles away, shining beyond it. From Mirador one sees that Baguio consists of a table-land, roughly circular, and some six or seven

miles in diameter. It is cup-shaped at the top, and in this circular valley the town lies. To the east, over the Baguio hills that rim the town, one sees the long, bare mountain range that culminates in the peak of Mount Pulag (9400 feet), about thirty miles away. I met a number of natives coming in to market, some of the women having very bright dresses; one young woman was gorgeously attired, smoked a huge cigar, and had balanced on the top of her head what I took to be an ornament, but which turned out to be a square piece of yellow soap.

In the afternoon the boys met the soldiers at baseball, and, playing splendidly, won a complete victory. I have become quite a convert to baseball. It is a game for busy people, more interest and excitement are crowded into an hour even than in football. After the game the Bishop and I walked up to Camp John Hay to call on the General. The officers' quarters, and especially the General's house, have one of the most beautiful views in the world, I think, and the whole place is kept in splendid order. I learnt, somewhat to my surprise, that except for the army of occupation the Philippines cost the U.S.A. nothing, all expenses being paid out of local revenue, and there is a considerable surplus. In the evening the boys celebrated their victory with a bonfire and impromptu entertainment, followed by choir practice. The favourites were "My country, 'tis of thee," for which I was given special permission to substitute "God Save the King," and a beautiful school hymn written by the Bishop.

On the following day (Sunday) we drove out for the 8 A.M. celebration at Easter School. I gave some account of Mission work among the aborigines, and this was followed by a Choral Eucharist beautifully sung. We met a great number of country people coming in to market and returning from it. Several led a dog by a cord or piece of bamboo, and it was a shock to learn that

this was their dinner, dog taking among these people the place of goat or sheep, so that your dog is praised, not for his beauty, but for his size and fatness. About six hundred dogs change hands every market-day. We had a hurried meal of sandwiches in the *carromato*, a light two-wheeled cart, and got back just in time for the 10 A.M. service at the school. The service is held on a large veranda, and there was a good attendance of townspeople.

The head master, who is evidently worshipped by the boys, has an original theory of corporal punishment. He holds that it should never be administered for a serious offence, but be freely used for trivial and not dishonourable breaches of law. For instance, last night we were sitting in his room when two small boys began to play ball in an adjoining room. "Jones," he called out to the elder, "don't you know that you must not play ball there." "I know it." "Well, come in here and let me talk to you about it." The boy came in quietly, took off his baseball glove and laid it neatly on a chair, went to a corner and fetched a flat piece of board and laid himself down across the master's knee. A smart spanking followed, which he bore without a wince, and went off quite happily with his offence purged.

In the evening there were some very interesting Bible classes, and after prayers I was requisitioned in the dormitory to tell the boys something about Australia until we were all ready for bed.

Next morning we were up at 5 A.M. and managed to get off about 6.30 A.M.

We had twelve *cargadores* or carriers to carry our luggage and fodder for the ponies. The three ladies and I had sturdy little mountain ponies, but Bishop Brent preferred to walk. The trail leaves the road just outside Baguio, and mounts up steeply for about twelve hundred feet, and then descending winds along the

mountain ridges fairly level for about twelve miles. The trail is most skilfully engineered, and is sometimes a mere ledge cut out of the side of a precipice which falls away hundreds of feet, so that you see the tops of the pines far below under your feet. Fortunately the ponies are sure-footed, for a slip would send rider and horse hundreds of feet below. The scenery is most marvellous. I have never seen anything more beautiful and rarely anything as beautiful. About 2 P.M. we reached the rest-house of Sapangao perched among the pines on the mountain side, and waited patiently for nearly two hours for the dinner which was to be ready immediately. Owing to the trail keeping to the ridges the views are generally distant and uninterrupted. When dinner did at last arrive, consisting of the inevitable fowl, beans, rice, and camotes (a kind of sweet potato), we did it ample justice, and then, after making a sketch of the rest-house, I climbed about sunset up on to the roof of things high above the trail and saw the sun set above a sea of clouds. The *cargadores* are a cheery lot. They carry enormous weights up the steepest hill on a bamboo framework which fits the back and is secured by straps round the shoulders and forehead. The pace is about two and a half to three miles an hour, which is good going for the country.

Next morning we left about 6.45 A.M. and had a day's journey which was far more wonderful than the last. For hours the trail ran, ever mounting but beautifully graded, along the western side of a great mountain. After the sun had been up for hours the trail was still in deep shadow and the rocky upper side of the track was hung with a marvellous tapestry of ferns and flowers. Gorgeous pink begonias, Japanese anemones, spiræa, balsams, Michaelmas daisies, white violets, white forget-me-not, pink azaleas, and wild roses on a background of countless ferns and wonderful mosses, white, green, yellow, old gold, brown, and every intervening

shade, all drenched in dew and festooned with fairy hammocks of spider web. The moisture-laden breeze comes over the top of the intervening mountains and keeps everything damp and fresh where it is shaded from the morning sun. On the left the mountain side falls a thousand feet almost perpendicularly, and in one place one can drop a pebble two thousand feet before it strikes the rock. We could see clear over the mountains to where the distant sea was hidden in cloud. We had lunch where a tiny stream crosses the track and where we could look down on the gullies filled with tree-ferns far below. After a few miles we ascended sharply for about five hundred feet and came into another world of ilex scrub above the pines. For several miles the trail ascended through the scrub, full of orchids, great masses of pink azalea, a wonderfully beautiful white hydrangea, crimson leaves, and moss-grown trees until it came out into a little clearing where there is a rest-house kept by an old soldier married to an Igorot woman. There is no distant view from the house, but the air is cold and fresh, as the house is 7300 feet above the sea, and great mists come sweeping up out of the world below and pass overhead of the little hollow in which the house lies. A track leads to a hill about half a mile distant, from which a magnificent view can be obtained. About dark we were quite ready for the host's invitation, "Sit right to, folks," and a feast of beautiful lamb, soup, rice, comotes, red cabbage, eschalots, and potatoes, all grown on the place. We did not get off until about 8.30 A.M. the following morning and the trail kept along the mountain-side all day at a height of about six thousand feet.

In the afternoon we emerged from the shady forest on to a bare hill-side along which the trail ran for a couple of miles or more; the slope below ran down uninterruptedly to the river four thousand feet below, and across the valley rose the great dividing range between

east and western Luzon with its summits wreathed in cloud. We made a short camp for lunch and reached the Boyayo rest-house (six thousand feet) about 5 P.M., after travelling about twenty-three miles. I felt so well that I walked nearly all the way and led my pony. During these three days the trail had never descended to five thousand feet, and had averaged about six thousand.

CHAPTER XX

BONTOC AND SAGADA (1913)

NEXT day, Thursday, we made a short day, leaving the rest-house about 8 A.M. and reaching the village of Mankayan towards 1.30 P.M., the distance being about seventeen miles. We descended some three thousand feet and passed several small hamlets and bits of cultivation as we neared Mankayan. Here the *presidente* or head-man gave us a decent house for our accommodation, but our ponies had to pass the night tied up to convenient fences. They have to be well separated as they fight furiously. We carried *trigo* or barley for them, and could usually get *palay* or rice in the ear and comotes in addition. Our *cargadores* left us here and we had a new lot next day. They are paid a *peso* (2s.) a day without food, which only costs them about 3d. a day; so they do well.

Next day we left at 6 A.M., and shortly lost our good trail, having to lead the horses down a place like the side of a house for about a thousand feet. The hills here were bare of trees, and the scenery equally beautiful but quite different from anything we had seen before. We passed small huts and small bits of cultivation, and, wherever it was possible, coming down on to the river we had a wonderful view of the rice-paddies below; the rice was about six inches above the water, and the brown earth shining through the water, between the parallel rows of rice, had the most beautiful translucent effect like watered silk of every shade, from brightest green to red, brown, and sometimes bright blue where

it reflected the sky. Our way lay down the narrow river valley for many miles and the heat was tremendous after the coolness of the mountains. We were all very glad to reach Cervantes about midday. Cervantes is a considerable village and boasts a *gubernador* and a post office. There is no rest-house or inn, however, and we were driven to invade an empty house whose owner was away, and make ourselves at home as best we could. Cervantes, though in the Bontoc country, is a Christian village, with a large church and good school. I made a sketch of it in the afternoon and was surrounded by all the children of the village, with whom I conversed in a mixture of Igorot Spanish and school English. We went to bed early in hopes of making a very long day next day.

We got up at 3.30 A.M., but had to have breakfast and load up a new lot of *cargadores*, so that we did not get off till 5.30 A.M. At Cervantes we found the main trail from the coast to Bontoc. It is well graded and wide enough to be practicable for the small native bull-carts. We rose gradually, following the course of a river, and getting some beautiful views of the gorge below. The extraordinary thing of travelling in this part of the world is that every day's scenery is entirely different from the preceding. In six days' journey we never had two days in the least alike. After some fifteen miles we left the main trail, and by a somewhat rough track reached, in five miles or so, the village of Bauco, where we rested for about four hours. We started once more, about 3 P.M., and striking the main trail again followed it till after dark, when our *cargadores* struck and said they could go no farther. We determined to leave them behind and go on, and had a long weary journey in the dark. Running into some bull-carts in the blackest and narrowest part of the trail, we had to go back some distance before we could pass. It was nearly 11 P.M. when we reached Bontoc, where every one had given us

up. The ladies were very tired, but stuck to the trail gallantly. Bishop Brent walked the whole thirty-seven miles of the day's journey; I walked a good deal, but got a good rest on my pony now and then.

Bontoc consists of a native town of about four thousand people and some thirty American residents, and is the capital of the mountain province. It is about three hundred years old and was garrisoned by the Spaniards, who, however, were several times wiped out by the turbulent population.

Bishop Brent has a strong Mission here and we stayed at the Mission House. The people were all head-hunters till lately, and feuds are still only restrained by the strong hand of the United States Government. Only the previous week some men from Bontoc killed others from a neighbouring town, and a force of several hundreds of armed men invaded Bontoc with the announced intention of clearing it out, but they were interrupted by the constabulary, and about sixty of the ringleaders lodged in gaol. We had a celebration in the little church at 8 A.M. on Sunday morning. The service was beautifully sung and very reverent. The ceremonia lis somewhat advanced, and seems to appeal to a people who are taught much by the eye. All the men carry spears about five feet long with a broad steel blade, and it is curious to see them peacefully carrying lime for building with these weapons in their hands. It is certain that were the American forces withdrawn local feuds would immediately break out with much bloodshed.

In the afternoon, through an excellent interpreter, I gave the children some account of the Missions to the Australian aborigines, and they seemed deeply interested. Evensong was very heartily and well sung in English, which the elder children understand fairly well. The girls wear a short shirt or blouse and a *sulu* such as our Mission boys wear, with a sash designed and woven by themselves in beautiful colours; the *sulu* is often also

woven by themselves, and the whole effect is excellent. The boys wear the national costume of loin-cloth and jacket. At church the girls wear a white handkerchief thrown over the head. It is very simple and looks very well.

On Monday I visited the native town, which consists of perhaps five hundred, more or less, conical grass houses. It is divided up into five wards, each of which is ruled by a council of old men, who meet on a curious platform of stones. The roofs of the houses come down to within three feet of the ground, and there are no walls. The people live and sleep on the ground under the roof, the house itself being used chiefly as a store-house for rice and camotes. The old women, girls, small boys, and unmarried men, all have separate ward dormitories. The girls are under no sort of moral control, and there is said to be much licence, but once the women are married they are said to be faithful to their husbands. Alongside of each house, and sometimes under the house, is a stone pit containing a pig, and the sty is rarely if ever made clean. I doubt if our aboriginals would live in the filth and smell of an Igorot town. I sat it out for about half an hour while I made a sketch, but had to flee before it was done. It must be understood that the Igorots are not, and never have been, Christians like the majority of Philippinos, and their traditions are all purely heathen. The Mission staff at Bontoc consists of three ladies, one layman, and one priest. I was immensely struck here and elsewhere by the high quality of the American women engaged in Mission work in the Philippines. It was not only that they were capable and earnest, but they were in most instances also women of high culture and education and well able to hold their own in any society. Many of them had come, and continue to work, at their own expense.

Next day the Vice-Governor-General arrived on a visitation of the North, and there was a wonderful

cañao (pronounced "canyow") or, as we should call it, corroboree held in his honour. Representatives came in from the neighbouring villages and towns until some two thousand were assembled, and each had its own particular dance. The men had bronze gongs which had been handed down for generations and which they will not sell at any price. The handle is always made of a human jaw-bone, and frequently the stick of a leg-bone. Many of the men are beautifully tattooed, and wear different head-dresses according to their tribe, while in their belt is stuck the formidable head-hunter's axe which they make at little primitive forges with bamboo bellows, and which up to a few years ago was in constant use for its real purpose. This axe is nearly square, and on the top back edge has a sharp iron beak some five or six inches long. One tribe, the Kalingas, wear a head-dress of feathers eighteen inches high. Some of the presidents or head-men interested me greatly by the keenness and intelligence of their faces. They were evidently accustomed to lead their men in more serious evolutions than the dance. One man named Otpod especially struck me. He was nearly six feet, which is very tall for an Igorot, and rules all the North country. He defied the Spanish power, and was imprisoned by them for seven years. The men dance round in a circle on their toes, beating gongs, and three or four women dance in the centre with much posturing and waving of the arms. In others the place of the women was taken by a man with shield and spear or head-axe. I never saw more graceful dancing, and the cries of the spectators and the noise of the gongs and the brilliant colour of the women's clothing and the men's head-dresses, and the excitement of the children, made a bewildering scene as we looked down on it from above. There must have been several thousand people crowded into the *plaza* below, and at least a dozen *cañaos* going on at the same time.

We left Bontoc about 9 A.M. on Thursday, and after retracing our old trail for three miles or so, struck up a steep track to the right, which rose 2500 feet in a few miles. The scenery again changed utterly, and we rode for some miles over bracken-covered uplands, full of caves and holes in the earth, and sharp-pointed limestone crags. About two miles from Sagada we were met by a number of boys from the Mission, who welcomed us with much blowing of horns and beating of gongs. I was astonished at the size and permanent character of the Mission buildings, as the Mission was only twelve years old. The buildings occupy a hill in an open valley five thousand feet above the sea and are about a quarter of a mile from the native village. They cover some eighty acres of ground and are substantially built of local stone and timber from the Mission mill. A large stone hospital and stone church to take the place of the present wooden buildings were in the course of erection. There are large workshops, dormitories, schools, stores, and other buildings, besides two fine houses for the Mission clergy, who are married men. The Mission extends its influence for a day's journey in all directions and has 1200 baptized members.

Next day I rode over with the ladies to the sawmill about six miles distant. The trail runs along the hills for about four miles, and then drops suddenly down 1500 feet into a green valley, where the sawmill is built in the river gorge. All the timber used in Bontoc and the surrounding district is cut in this mill and has to be carried ten miles on men's shoulders, and it provides a living for hundreds of men, women, and children. The women carry the heavier loads, then the men, while the children carry the smaller pieces. The mill has proved very profitable to the Mission. The scenery was exquisitely beautiful, and I stayed to sketch while the ladies returned. On my way back in the afternoon I had wonderful views of Sagada

backed by high mountains black with mist and rain-clouds.

At 5 P.M. the service of the Stations of the Cross was held in the church. Thirty or forty adults, mostly men, besides the school children were present. The service lasted over an hour, and many of the men had just knocked off work, but there was no flagging of attention. The singing was beautiful and entirely congregational, and the people seemed to feel that it was their service and a solemn act of devotion. It certainly was a democratic service, for Igorots and Ilocanos, English and Americans, Spaniards and Mestizos, men and women, bishops and little children were thoroughly mixed up in the congregation which walked and prayed round the church. At night it rained heavily.

On Saturday morning we all rode over to Besao, a village about five miles off, where the Mission had just put a teacher and school. The trail was very narrow and the rain had made it slippery and dangerous. In some places there was less than a foot of it, which is not pleasant with a fall of two hundred feet below. The site of the new Mission commands a wonderful view. We raced a shower back and rain fell in the afternoon. The workshops of the Mission are extraordinarily complete, and all kinds of carpentering and ironwork are done, besides plumbing and tin-smithing. The electric light plant is managed entirely by Igorot boys, and a young Igorot is head of the printing department, which turns out most excellent work.

On Sunday morning the Bishop held a confirmation at which fifty-five candidates were confirmed. In the afternoon he left for Bagnan, where he was to hold service at night and confirm early on Monday morning. In the afternoon Señor M., a Spanish gentleman, who is one of the right hands of the Mission, undertook to guide us to a neighbouring cave. I had much interesting conversation with him—or, rather, received much

interesting information from him, for although I easily understood what he said I did not feel my Spanish equal to giving him much information in return.

The whole of this mountain country is liable to landslips, and he pointed out a large portion of a valley which, with the houses and rice-fields on it, had dropped thirty feet in three days. Indeed, we noted a flourishing camote-field on our way to the cave, and on our return we found that a portion of the centre of the field had in the meanwhile sunk five feet into the ground. The cave is a very large one, extending about a third of a mile underground, and is fifty feet wide and a hundred feet high. Through it runs a subterranean river which reappears four or five miles lower down. Señor M. was formerly a Spanish officer, and was hidden in this cave many years ago during an insurrection.

Next morning we left the Mission at 6.45. I was deeply impressed by the Missions both here and at Bontoc. They are exercising a wide influence, and evidently fill a very real place in the lives of the people. Should the Philippinos be given independence, it is very doubtful whether the Missions would be adequately protected from the *ladrones*, who are only held in check by the American Government. It is more than doubtful whether a Philippino Government could maintain safety of life and property in these wild regions. We picked up the Bishop at the village of Bagnan soon after 8 A.M., and continued our way up the mountain, which was shrouded in mist. We rose steadily to a height of 6000 feet and came on to the region of oaks and other high-altitude trees. About 9 A.M. the mist rolled away and we had a most magnificent view on both sides, the trail, which was in parts very rough, following the ridges of the mountains. About 10 A.M. we reached the summit, 6500 feet, and thence plunged down 5000 feet to the valley of the Abra, stopping to rest for an hour at the picturesque village of Cayam on the way. We found

the river-bed very rough, being filled with boulders and swollen with the recent rain; and, just missing a thunder-storm, reached about 3 P.M. our old trail where we had left it ten days before at the town of Cervantes, where we put up at the house of the *gubernador*, whose active wife made us extremely comfortable. The Bishop, soon after our arrival, set off in the rain on a long ride to baptize two children somewhere in the mountains and did not return till dark.

Cervantes is situated in the river valley between two great ranges of mountains, and is consequently very hot. It used to be the capital of the province, but this has now been transferred to Bontoc. We were to have started at six o'clock next morning, but owing to the temporary indisposition of one of the party did not get off till 8 A.M. We had to cross the great ridge of mountains which runs north and south between Cervantes and the sea, and rose up by a good trail in long zigzags to nearly six thousand feet, coming again among the pines and oak-trees. The descent on the other side facing the sea was totally different, the whole mountain-side being clothed in a mass of tropical jungle full of gorgeous butterflies and strange birds. In places the cliffs rose almost perpendicularly for over a thousand feet, but so covered by vegetation that no rock could be seen. After a long descent on the western side we reached the Cuscusnong rest-house, situated on the banks of a wild rocky river. We could find no one in charge, but after a time our *cargadores* began to arrive, and an American road foreman turned up with rolls, fresh venison, and a small boy to be baptized. After the baptism we had a sumptuous tea and went to bed, as we knew we should have a long day on the morrow. We were off before 6 A.M., and for four or five hours followed the course of the river, finally leaving the foothills behind us and emerging from the mountains on to the sea plain six or seven miles from the important town of Tagadin. Here

we were hospitably entertained at lunch by the local Governor, and about 4 P.M. we left in a motor from San Fernando, which we had ordered by telegraph to be there to meet us. Shortly after leaving the town we came to a wide but shallow river, which we crossed on a most primitive raft of a single thickness of slender bamboos fastened together. How it ever bore the weight of the motor and its passengers I cannot conceive. We had no fewer than six of these rivers to cross, but the rafts on the others were stronger, though the road itself was heavy and sandy, as it ran parallel to the sea for nearly thirty miles. It was long after dark when we reached San Fernando, and next morning we continued our journey by motor to the railhead of the North Coast Railway, which we left about 9.30 A.M. on the ten hours' journey to Manila.

Looking back on my visit to the mountains, it stands out as one of the most delightful times I have ever spent. I have, of course, seen higher mountains in Switzerland and elsewhere, but nowhere have I experienced such infinite variety or a more delightful climate.

For the information of those desiring to travel I add a few hints. Bedsteads are provided at the rest-houses, but bedding should be taken, as also a certain amount of food, though many of the rest-houses provide excellent meals. Each person requires at least two *cargadores*, who carry about 46 lb. and cost 2s. a day. A pony may be hired at Baguio for about 30s. a week. Some feed should be carried, as *palay* is not always obtainable. The *cargadores* will travel about twenty-five miles a day. The ladies of our party thoroughly enjoyed the trip and suffered no inconveniences, but it is not a country in which ladies should travel alone. A large canteen for water should be carried, as it is not safe to drink the water unboiled.

Before leaving Manila I had the opportunity of attending a lunch at which many of the prominent Ameri-

cans of Manila were present, and the question of Philippine independence was discussed. The general opinion seemed to be that it would be an immoral act on the part of the United States to give up the Philippines at the present moment, though no one wished to retain them once the Philippinos were fit for independence.

I must confess to being most agreeably surprised by the American administration in the Philippines. An immense amount has been accomplished in a very short time, and the good of the people seems to be the real aim of the administration.

The higher officials seem to be men with high, and in some instances with very high, ideals, and the lower officials, governors of towns and so on, seem to be capable, efficient, and interested in their work, though one wonders what will be the result in the future of the fact that so many of them have native wives.

I saw absolutely nothing of any high-handedness or oppression on the part of Government officials. So far as I can judge, the Americans are making a real success of Luzon and other islands, are trying honestly to bear the white man's burden for the good of the people, and are trying to train them for an independence which they recognize must be in the very far and dim future.

Much harm is being done, however, by ignorant people in the United States who know nothing of what is being done, and by advocating a policy of scuttle are raising false ideas among the Philippinos.

With the Mohammedan Moros in Mindanao and Jolo the Americans seem to have been less successful. They have tried only a policy of repression, with the result that in Jolo every man in the island is practically out on the warpath and the Americans are apparently in for a bad time.

The other point that struck me about the Philippines was the immense influence exercised by Bishop Brent among men of all classes and political opinions. It is

an open secret that he has again been offered other work, and if he should leave the Philippines one of the strongest factors for peace and mutual understanding will be withdrawn.

It is clear that the interests of Australia are bound up with the Philippines to a considerable extent. For one thing, nearly everything that is used by the Americans—flour, butter, milk, jam, honey, meat, cattle, fodder—comes from Australia; and the total volume of trade, including the supplies for the army of occupation, must be enormous. It is sincerely to be hoped that the Americans will not withdraw until the Philippinos are strong enough to stand alone, and that is not likely to be in this generation.

CHAPTER XXI

A WHITE AUSTRALIA (1917)

THE Philippines with their teeming coloured population and tiny garrison of white men, who do no manual work, suggest at once a comparison with Northern Australia, which approaches nearer to the Equator than Manila, and the question as to whether it is either desirable or possible to keep Australia as a whole a white man's country.

The White Australia policy has suffered not a little from its friends and defenders. It has been advocated in some cases on such purely selfish grounds, with such absurd arrogance and self-conceit, and with such unjustifiable contempt for all coloured races, that decent men are tempted to turn from it in disgust because of its advocates; nor do we see how it can be defended unless those who advocate it are prepared to admit that it is their duty to "take up the white man's burden," and that in return for their privileges they must have duties and responsibilities also.

We believe, however, that in spite of some of its defenders there is much to be said for an enlightened White Australia policy, and it is not altogether or even principally from lower motives that it has been advocated.

The great objection to the admission of Asiatics into Australia is that their standard of living is so enormously lower than that of the white men, their industry so great, their hours of work so long, and their numbers so vast, that they would inevitably in no long time bring down

enormously the rate of wages and throw the white man out of work unless he adopted their standard of living and gave up all his leisure. It is true that for certain kinds of work the white man, if he kept sober, would probably command higher wages, but, on the other hand, in unskilled labour he cannot compete with the slow but late and early working Asiatic, while even in highly skilled labour the Chinaman, for instance, will do nearly as much work, will do it nearly if not quite as well, has no nerves, and is never off duty.

Now Australia has, thanks in large measure to the Labour Party, slowly and painfully built up a condition of things in which, while there are few very rich men, the wealth, comfort, and leisure of the average man, including every class of labour, is far in advance of any other country. There is practically no poverty, there need be no poverty were it not for the £20,000,000 that the five million people of Australia annually spend in drink. Now to have made it possible for every person to be free from poverty, even if all are through their own fault not so free, is a great achievement; to have secured that no man or woman shall have to work more than eight hours a day, unless they have the misfortune to be brain workers, is a great achievement; to have secured that no one shall have to starve or go into a workhouse in old age is a great achievement; to have secured by education and freedom of political opportunity that every man shall have an equal chance of self-advancement is no small achievement; and the average Australian sees very clearly that coloured labour means the destruction of all these hardly gained rights and privileges. It means that a few will become rich at the expense of the many. It means that wages will drop enormously without a corresponding fall in prices. It means that his leisure will be gone and that an element of fierce and deadly competition will enter into his life. It means that henceforth he will have to work, like the Asiatic, solely to live,

and that art, literature, and recreation must disappear out of his life.

He is perhaps inordinately proud of what he has done, and does not realize how he has been helped by fortune and nature, but for all that he can hardly be blamed for regarding the general life of Australia, with all its too little realized and availed of opportunities, as something higher and more valuable to the world than the fierce competitive struggle to live only of the Asiatic, and for feeling that the world would be the poorer if the white civilization were swallowed up in Australia, or if it became a country of great bosses, cheap coloured labour, and mean whites.

It is easy to see how such fears may at times express themselves brutally and in exaggerated or ridiculous forms.

I believe that White Australia is a justifiable policy if the Australian recognizes that he has a privileged position, not because he is inherently superior to all other men, but because the conditions of the country have been exceptionally favourable for development along the lines he has adopted, and if he admits that he owes special duties to less fortunate peoples and especially to the less advanced coloured races of the East. If he is not called upon to admit them to his country he is called upon to treat them with courtesy and justice and to give of his best to help in their uplift. If he believes in Christianity himself, he is surely especially bound to hand on the truth he believes to his more ignorant and less capable younger brethren.

Admitting White Australia, then, as a justifiable principle, though confessing that the ordinary Australian at present thinks very much more of his own interests in the matter than he does of his duties and responsibilities, we have to consider the specific case of the tropical Far North, and the narrow strip of fertile tropical coast lands where the white man is undoubtedly handicapped by the climate in a way that he is not handicapped

in the table-lands of the interior even far up into the tropics. The areas in question are not so very large if we exclude the great mining districts and the wide extent of cattle country where the need of coloured labour does not come in. They consist of the sugar lands on the east coast from Mackay northwards occurring only at intervals, and being only a few miles wide, between the range and the sea, and of a few fertile areas on the coast and along the rivers of the Northern Territory and North-West Australia. Most of the rest of the land, where it is not too poor, is being used for cattle and for mining. There is little doubt that the areas referred to are in all capable of supporting a larger population and producing larger returns if cultivated with coloured labour, and it is almost certain that much of the land now used for cattle might under similar conditions become vastly more productive.

At present Australia is open to the reproach of keeping the land practically empty, for mining has been very slack for many years past, and cattle-runs employ an incredibly small number of men relatively to the vast area nominally occupied. The total white population of the Northern Territory is even now less than one to every one hundred square miles. How can this be remedied?

Three plans have been suggested.

(1) The drawing of a colour line and giving over of the North to coloured labour. It does not seem worth while to discuss this plan, because it is certain that the Labour Party would not consent to it. The expressed fear that the coloured element would drift south is probably groundless, but it would be a definite abandonment of the White Australia policy, and as such it would be rejected by probably four-fifths of the Australian voters whether Labour or not.

(2) Indented coloured labour returnable after three years. There is much to be said for this policy in spite

of the suspicion with which it is regarded by the White Australian purists. If properly carried out there would seem to be little danger in it for the White Australia policy, and it would give employment to a large number of white men. It is a mistake to suppose that indented labour in a tropical country necessarily competes with white labour. On the contrary, by taking over the hardest part of the work in a tropical sun it provides employment for nearly an equal number of white men in the capacity of overseers, sugar-mill employees, grooms and ploughmen, and a host of other employments. In sugar growing, for instance, there are only two operations that a white man finds really exhausting, cutting and trashing, but these are vital to the industry. White men do indeed do the former, but at such a price that it is doubtful if the industry can continue, and the latter is left undone to the great risk and injury of the cane. No white man will tackle it. In cases where Asiatics or even aborigines are occasionally allowed to work on wharves, etc., because no other labour can be got, the unions insist that they shall be paid union wages—that is, from 12s. 6d. to £1 or more a day. The difficulty of applying this principle to tropical industries would be that the product would be too costly for any but home consumption.

(3) The third alternative is practically to pay people to live in the tropical North by a costly system of subsidies and a whole army of officials. I have discussed this system in my chapter on the Northern Territory, and shown that it has so far not been an unqualified success. It is the system most consonant to the White Australia ideal, but it is so costly that it is doubtful whether even the wealth of Australia can for long support it, especially in view of the enormous war debt. Yet the empty North is a constant and ever-increasing peril to Australia. The world is increasing in population and ever looking for outlets for its surplus. Is it reasonable to suppose that Australia will be long

allowed to keep hundreds of thousands of square miles of cultivable land empty and without inhabitant? To say nothing of European nations, both China and Japan urgently need an outlet, and now that the war has shown how easily an unscrupulous party can organize and exploit a peaceful nation for war, it is useless to shut our eyes to the fact that the vacant lands of Australia will attract covetous eyes, and that if some other nation should at a time of crisis demand them on the ground that Australia was making no use of them, it would be very hard for Australia to give any satisfactory reply. It is not clear how the danger can be met so long as the Australian birth-rate continues to fall. Australia needs population above everything, and children are the very thing that Australians refuse to give to it.

Some years ago I had an interesting correspondence with the editor of one of the most influential newspapers in Australia. He was an ardent advocate of a White Australia and argued that the empty North did not matter, because in a hundred years or so the southern part of Australia would be full and then population would naturally press North and fill up the empty lands there. As a matter of fact, however, we are only filling the South of Australia very slowly, and even if it were probable that the overflow would flow North in a hundred years, there is small probability of Australia being allowed to keep the North empty for that period.

The low birth-rate and the ever-increasing concentration of population into a few large towns are the greatest perils which Australia has to face. The two evils are closely connected together. In the country children add little to the cost of living and very soon more than earn their own living; in the town high rents, high cost of living, and clothing, and the desire to emulate neighbours, all tend to make the maintenance and education of children a heavy burden.

But more and more people refuse to live anywhere

but in the big towns, life seems to them intolerable without constant excitement and daily picture shows. Yet the crying need of Australia is a country population settled on the land. There are hundreds of thousands of acres out of cultivation to-day because the children of the farmers are not content to live out of the town, and millions of acres more never cultivated because men will not go on the land.

The inordinate love of pleasure seems to be at the root of both evils. Men no longer love work for the work's sake, no longer see any dignity or worth in it, no longer desire to do it well or thoroughly. The one idea is in too many cases to get it over as soon as possible, well or ill ("good enough" is an almost universal phrase), and to get the pay which is the only thing that really matters, and which matters because it represents so much pleasure which is the real end and aim of life. Until Australia really faces the question of the love of pleasure, and the matters of the birth-rate and crowding into towns which spring from it, there will be little hopeful in her future.

Once a big town is started in a State it becomes an ever-growing octopus stretching out its lines of railway like tentacles and strangling every attempt to make any other outlet for the industries of the State than through itself, and taking good toll of all as they pass. More and more people are attracted by Government work and Government doles, the country districts, which are the real life of the State, are more and more depleted, and the citizens of the metropolis, instead of being ashamed of themselves, pride themselves on the daily growth of the town and form associations to accelerate it, putting little-needed pressure on the Government to crush out all opposition to its boasted supremacy. It is a thousand pities that the Labour Party, which has done so much in many ways for Australia, does not realize more clearly the true causes of a country's greatness.

There is too much tendency to consider that all is well so long as work is plentiful and wages high, while no real efforts are made to grapple with the fatal and inevitable tendencies of bureaucracy to muddle, mismanagement, and the putting of the interest of the department before the interest of the public. In no country in the world is public money spent so recklessly, foolishly, and blindly as in Australia, and the Labour Party have been probably the greatest offenders, not through graft and self-interest, but rather through a foolish sentimentality which argued that so long as money was being spent some working man was being benefited; and an inability, owing to lack of training and education, to take wide views or to attack the real sources of evils and of mismanagement rather than their individual manifestations. Meanwhile the menace of the East remains, if for the moment the world is occupied with greater issues, and the vote on the Referendum on Service Abroad showed that a majority of the voters of Australia were still wrapped in a dream and are living in a fool's paradise. "What a blessing it is," I heard a supposed intelligent woman say lately, "that Australia is so far from anywhere, and can never possibly suffer from the horrors of war. We shall never need an army in Australia!" These are the people to whom the fate of Australia is entrusted by the adult franchise, and the outlook is not hopeful unless in some way the people can be made to realize more deeply that privileges involve responsibilities.

The people of Australia have in the past been too ready to take for granted all the advantages that they have been given by climate, situation, natural resources, isolation from competition, combined with the protection of the Mother Country, and too slow to recognize that after all they are a part of both the Empire and the human race, and that they cannot permanently isolate themselves from the joys or the sorrows of either.

The war was a startling challenge to this attitude, and all the world knows how gallantly a large minority of the sons of Australia and their relatives responded to the call. Still it was shown by the Referendum vote to be a minority only, and the fact causes deep anxiety to all who care for the future of Australia. Selfishness and a failure to achieve a wider outlook than their own immediate interests still characterize too large a proportion of the people.

The Labour Party in Australia has now a great oppotunity. It has done very much for Australia in the past, and it may do much for Australia in the future. The best of its leaders have shown patriotism and foresight and have remembered the need for a wider outlook alike on life and on politics, but a larger proportion of the party are still dominated by class selfishness, and openly put the supposed good of a class before the interests of Australia as a whole.

So far as I can see the future of Australia depends largely on whether the better or the worse elements in the Labour Party obtain the final mastery. The day has passed in Australia when it was a question of the struggle between capital and labour, for labour is everywhere triumphant. The question is now what kind of Labour Government is to dominate Australia. Is it to be a Labour Party which takes a wide and sane view of its duty and its responsibilities, or a Labour Party dominated by class hatred, and preferring its own immediate aims to the safety and welfare of the country? It would be well for the Labour Party in its own interests to make the point clear, for it must be remembered that the success of the Labour Party in the past has been largely due to the support of those who, while not sympathizing with its class interests, have believed that it was the best available agent for ameliorating social conditions and removing economic injustice.

Meanwhile with regard to the empty North and the

White Australia ideal it must be remembered that the Labour Party is the only party that has made any practical attempt to deal with the problem. I fear that the success of the attempt has not been striking, but for all that the party deserves the fullest credit for attempting to grapple with the difficulty. With its successful solution the future of Australia is indissolubly bound up.

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